







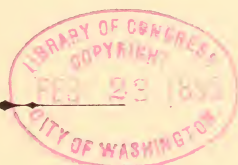
HEAVENLY TRADE-WINDS

BY

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"THE PEOPLE'S CHRIST," "WHITE SLAVES," "THE REVIVAL
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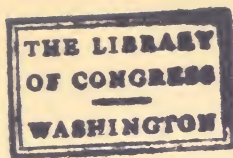


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To my Friend,
THE HONORABLE W. BYRON DANIELS,
of Vancouver, Washington,

THIS VOLUME
is Dedicated, with grateful affection,

BY
THE AUTHOR.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE sermons included in this volume have all been delivered during the past six months in the regular course of my ministry in the Hanson Place Methodist Episcopal Church, Brooklyn. They have been blessed of God in comforting the weary, giving courage to the faint, arousing the indifferent, and awakening the sinful. They are given to the printer with an earnest prayer that, wherever they go, they may indeed be Heavenly Trade-winds, bringing benedictions of spiritual help and blessing.

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS,

BROOKLYN, December, 1894.

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HEAVENLY TRADE-WINDS.

I.

THE HEAVENLY TRADE-WINDS.

“Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.”—
SONG OF SOLOMON IV, 16.

THIS is a prayer for the heavenly trade-winds, which, blowing together, like the “all things” which “work together” in Paul’s gospel, make a healthy atmosphere for the aspiring soul.

I have not invited you to a study of this Scripture to lead you into the maze of theological criticism, “higher” or otherwise. Whatever this book may be intended to teach, the Scripture which I have read, studied in the light of the whole Bible, furnishes a rich opportunity for Christian meditation. It is my purpose to study the text as referring to the individual soul, which may, without any straining of the imagination, be compared to a garden. Does not Paul say,

"We are God's husbandry?" or, as the New Version translates it, "God's tilled land?"

We have then, first of all, a prayer for the north wind, which may seem strange to some, yet, in the light of experience in the cultivation of the soil, it is a wise prayer; for the north wind, which brings to us winter's cold and snow and ice, is as necessary in bringing to perfection the treasures of the garden as are the warm and more pleasing breezes from the south. The strong grip of the ice, which pulverizes the soil, is just as necessary as the long, warm days of perpetual sunshine; and however unpleasant the north wind of trial and hardship may seem to us while we are undergoing it, observation and experience unite with Scripture in teaching that this hard discipline contributes to the growth of the peaceable fruits of righteousness in the garden of the soul. Christ says, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." These words of the Savior, instead of treating sorrow as something evil to be dreaded, speak of it rather as a matter of sublime congratulation. George MacDonald, the London poet-preacher, commenting on this most comforting of the Beatitudes, declares that it proves that sorrow is no partition-wall between

man and God, and forms no obstacle to the passage of God's light into man's soul.

Many of the most useful and noble men and women who have lived, and whose splendid characters have dignified human history, have owed, very largely, their spiritual cultivation to the severe north winds that have blown upon them. We know that Jacob's character mellowed and ripened through agony of fear, and became sublime only after years of shadow and heart-breaking grief. Who can tell how much of Joseph's splendid statesmanship and lofty benevolence of character was the fruit of the weary years he spent in the Egyptian dungeon?

Bunyan, the Bedford tinker, while health and strength and freedom were his, was of little account; but Bunyan, the prisoner of the gospel, sweetened by sorrow, made patient by trial, his soul uplifted through spiritual meditation, became the grandest seer of his time, and the Bedford jail was the loftiest pinnacle there was on earth in his day. Tens of thousands of souls, cheered and comforted on their way by his "Pilgrim's Progress," have had reason to thank God for the north wind that blew so sternly across John Bunyan's garden.

"I had been ruined," said Themistocles, "had

I not been ruined." Horace says the poet must weep who would make others weep. And Shelley, out of his own bitter experience, wrote that poets "must learn in suffering what they teach in song." The deep pathos in the poems of Cowper, especially that one that begins, "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform," came from the anguish of a broken heart. It is an old saying that a nightingale sings the sweetest when wounded; and a renowned teacher of music, on being asked how his most promising pupil was progressing, answered: "Only tolerably well. Her mechanical execution is almost perfect. She has full control of her voice, and knows all the outside of her art; but she lacks soul, and she will have to suffer before she can get it. If only something would break her heart, she would be the greatest singer in Europe."

No one can comfort others in sorrow like those who have walked in the vale of sorrow themselves. As Phillips Brooks says, in one of his great Easter sermons: "One of the most blessed things about sorrow is, that if we pass through it bravely and reverently, taking the cup of grief with trust from the hand of God, we get the key of that sorrow forever, so that we may

open the darkened way into comfort to any one else who is called to endure the same sorrow."

"You have suffered, and have come through your suffering into the light; and as you stand there, looking back, who is it that comes up the road where you remember to have walked years back, when you were a boy or a girl—the road that led to your suffering? You look, and lo! another light and careless heart is coming, singing, up the road where you came. You know where the road leads to, but he has not yet caught sight of the trial that blocks it. Suddenly he comes in sight of that trial, and starts back. He stands in fright. He trembles. He is ready to run. 'Father, save me from it!' you hear him cry. What can you do for him? If you are wise and willing, you go down and meet him, and you hold out before him, in some sympathetic act or word, the key of your experience. 'Let me show you,' you say. 'Not because I am any greater or better than you, but only because the Father led me there first. Let me show you the way into, the way through, and the way out of, this sorrow which you can not escape. Into it by perfect submission, through it by implicit obedience, out of it with purified passions and perfect love.' He sees the key in your hand; he sees

the experience in your face, and so he trusts you. . . .

“The wondrous power of experience! And see how beautiful and ennobling this makes our sorrows and temptations! Every stroke of sorrow that issues into light and joy is God putting into your hand the key of that sorrow, to unlock it for all the poor souls whom you may see approaching it for all your future life. It is a noble thing to take that key and use it. There are no nobler lives on earth than those of men and women who have passed through many experiences of many sorts, and who now go about, with calm and happy and sober faces, holding their keys—some golden and some iron—and finding their joy in opening the gates of these experiences to younger souls, and sending them into them, full of intelligence and hope and trust.”

No Christian can make a greater mistake than to suppose that trial and hard experience are an indication of displeasure, or indifference, or forgetfulness, on the part of God. The most insidious skepticism is that which blinds the troubled soul to the comfort of God's personal thought and care. Julia Ward Howe once invited Charles Sumner to come to her house to

meet a distinguished friend. Sumner declined, and, in doing so, said: "I have got to that period when I have lost all interest in individuals." "Why, Charles," was Mrs. Howe's witty reply, "God has not gotten so far as that!"

One of the hardest things to bear in time of trial is the misunderstandings that are so common. A charming story is told of the brusque Professor Blackie, of Edinburgh University, who was noted for his bluntness and severity, but who had a soft spot in his heart, if one could bore deep enough to find it. On one occasion Professor Blackie was lecturing to a new class, with whose *personnel* he had very slight acquaintance. A student rose to read a paragraph, with his book in his left hand. "Sir," thundered Blackie, "hold your book in your right hand!" and, as the student tried to speak, "No words, sir! Your right hand, I say!" The student held up his right arm, ending piteously at the wrist. "Sir, I have no right hand," he said. Before Blackie could open his lips there arose a storm of hisses, and by it his voice was overborne. Then the professor left his place, and went down to the student he had so unwittingly hurt, and put his arm around the lad's shoulder, and drew him close, until the lad leaned against

his breast. "My boy," said Blackie—he spoke very softly, yet not so softly but that every word was audible—"My boy, you'll forgive me that I was over-rough? I did not know! I did not know!" How much of the sorrow of the world comes from lack of comprehension of the conditions which beset our brother's life!

"Some lives are strangely rough and swayed and driven:
Some wind-blown clouds across a wintry sky,
Or ships, with compass lost or rudderless,
On heaving oceans drifting helplessly.

Some lives, most fit for high and noble deeds,
Are held and fettered sore with common things;
Some hearts hold sealed wells of tenderness,
And saints walk through the world with folded wings.

It is not well to judge, with finite sense,
Our own or others' failures. Let us wait
Till in the light of the swift-coming dawn
The mist shall lift, and all grow clear and straight."

We have here, also, a prayer for the south wind, and this is in God's order. For when the snow-king hath wrought his will, and the ice has served its purpose, and the short raw days and the long cold nights have done all they can to fit the soil of the garden for the growth of plants, then, up from the great south-land God brings the warm breath of the south wind to soothe and comfort the weary earth; to call the

buried seeds out of the body of death in which they are wrapped; to warm the cold earth until it becomes a nourishing bosom for tiny infant flowers and plants.

There could be no garden without the south wind. Neither can there be any spiritual development without the warm and gracious sympathy of the Holy Spirit, and the tenderness of the Father's heart, as revealed in the Savior's love. From beginning to end the gospel is as full of good cheer as springtime and summer are of inspiration and gladness.

The south wind and the sunshine will not let any tree or plant that has life in it resist its benevolent purpose. I have watched in the spring days the battle going on, seemingly, between the stubborn scrub-oak and the spring sun and the warm south wind. All the winter-time the oak had kept its soggy and withered leaves; ugly, dirty-bronze color, like the skin of some ancient mummy, they hung over the little tree; but after a few days of the warm south wind, aided by the heat of the sun, the hidden life, coming up through the arteries of the tree, pushed out through the branches into the little twigs, and fairly shoved off the ugly leaves and bade them begone; and, a little later, the tree was covered

with the brilliant promise of summer. So, if we have spiritual life in us at all; if our faith and hope look up, even through sadness and misgiving, and our roots run downward into the soil of confidence in God, the warm breath of God's tenderness and love will push off our sluggish doubts and ugly fears, and clothe us in hope and beauty.

I remember hearing Dr. George Pentecost tell that one time he was entertained for several weeks in a private family, where the wife and mother had been sick with rheumatic fever, and all her physical vigor and vitality seemed to be chilled out of her. She also confided to Dr. Pentecost that, in her long illness, she had somehow come into a depressed and morbid state of mind, and had lost the spiritual comfort and joy which she had once known. Dr. Pentecost came home one day and found her sitting, as he had a number of times before, in a south window which was open to the spring sun, and she was sitting there in the sunshine, with her shoulder bared except for some thin covering. She said the doctor had prescribed this for her, hoping that the sun-bath would burn out, as it were, any lurking tendency to rheumatism that might remain in her system. And she gladly assured

the Doctor that she was already getting great help from it.

"Why, then," said Dr. Pentecost, "are you not willing to try the same treatment for your soul, when God recommends it to you?" And he turned to that verse in Jude which says: "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Then he explained to her how it was possible, by meditation on God's goodness and by living in the atmosphere of his promises, to keep ourselves in the south window of God's kindness and care, and was able to bring his friend out of that spiritual paralysis into an atmosphere of warm and cheerful confidence.

Perhaps there are some of us who may need the same lesson. There are some medical institutions where they depend almost entirely for the recovery of patients from disease on the use of the sun-bath. And I am sure that, however it may work physically, there are tens of thousands of rheumatic and paralyzed Christians who need a sun-bath of gospel treatment.

But, after all, neither the north wind nor the south wind will be of any value if it blow on barren rock, or desolate sand, or soil overgrown with thorns. Our souls are to be cultivated gar-

dens. A garden suggests at once cultivation, and not only so, but cultivation of the highest type. A great deal more care is put on the cultivation of the garden than upon the large, out-reaching fields. A garden suggests that wild growths have been removed. Trees have been felled, stumps have been burned out, roots have been dug up, plowing and harrowing have been done, and the roller has been brought into service; even the small clods have been pulverized, needed fertilizing materials have been added to the soil, and then it is ready for the precious seeds and roots that are to be cultivated.

So we are to be God's tilled land, not wild land, but the special garden of his care and cultivation. Every wicked growth must be felled. Every stump of lust and passion must be burned out. Every ugly root of evil thought must be dug from the heart's affection. The plow and the harrow of God's discipline and grace must have the right of way in our hearts. Only then shall we be fitted to have heavenly seed sown therein, and soil ready, under God's cultivation, to produce the fragrant and beautiful graces of the Spirit.

If we shall thus yield our souls to be the garden of the Lord, he shall cause to flourish there

a variety of beautiful graces. Those people who only grow one or two plants in their spiritual garden, and excuse themselves from growing the gentle and kindly graces, do not get their lessons in spiritual gardening from the New Testament. Paul, who was an expert at spiritual horticulture, declares that the fruit of the Spirit—a garden where the Holy Spirit controls—is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. There is a bouquet that will be pleasing to anybody who has come to be in any sense a partaker of the divine nature. Peter, also a good soul-gardener, tells something about the plants which he would grow. The first shrub which he mentions is faith, and to that he would add virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. And, with that accustomed daring and impulsiveness of Peter, he asserts that nobody can raise these plants without having a good garden. “For,” he says, “if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We have also suggested the effect of such a garden. The prayer in our text is for the north wind and the south wind to blow upon the garden, not only that it may be brought to perfection, but that the spices thereof may flow out.

It is impossible to have a beautiful garden, full of fruits and flowers, without their fragrance being wafted on the viewless air, giving comfort not only to those who are permitted to enter, but to those who look upon it or breathe its perfume from the street. No man can build a wall high enough to shut out all the fragrance of a beautiful garden from the poorest passer-by. And if he builds no wall, but lives with open gate, keeping his garden, not for himself, but for his neighbors, it fills all the community with its delight.

How precious does this illustration make our possibilities of Christian living! If we cultivate in our hearts the graces of the Spirit, no limitations of our lives can hinder the saving spice thereof from reaching others. A beautiful bouquet of flowers can not be spoiled by the rude or cracked vase in which it is held.

A baby carriage stood, the other day, in front of a small shop. In it slept a pretty, dimpled baby. A drowsy puppy lay on the pillow, its

black nose snuggled close to the baby's cheek. By the carriage stood a ragged little waif, dirty, with scarcely enough clothes for decency. She stroked in turn the baby and the puppy.

A lady, passing by, noticed the strange picture—the beautiful baby, the little dog, the ragged child. The baby's mother was in the shop. "Are you caring for these?" said the lady to the waif.

A wonderful smile lit up the dirty little face. "No, please, ma'am; I am only loving them." No rags, or lack of beauty in the vase, could take away from the beauty and fragrance of love in the little heart.

Many times our righteousness is stern and unattractive because it lacks the spice of brotherly tenderness. Old Father Taylor, the sailor-preacher in Boston, asked a certain Methodist minister to enter his pulpit on one occasion, and he refused because a Unitarian was there. The good old man, in indignation, fell on his knees in the aisle, and cried out before the whole audience: "O Lord, deliver us, here in Boston, from bad rum and bigotry! Thou knowest which is worst, but I do n't!" God save us from a garden without the spices of Christly sympathy and love!

Miracles of helpfulness are possible to those who cultivate the Christly graces in their hearts. Some poet sings:

“The cultivation of your souls
May warp you as you sit apart;
March out into the light, and heal—
For all can heal—some broken heart.

Think of yourselves as those in whom
The gift of miracles is yet;
For in his circle each can work
These miracles. Do not forget!”

If we live in this atmosphere, and develop this Christ-like spirit, Dryden’s words shall be true of us in a higher sense than he intended:

“A constant trade-wind will securely blow,
And gently lay us on the spicy shore.”

II.

THE CONDITIONS OF A FRAGRANT LIFE.

"Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon."—SONG OF SOLOMON IV, 11.

THIS is a fascinating description of a beautiful and fragrant character and life. It pictures a conversation which may be compared to "honey and milk," both sweet and pleasurable, as well as nourishing and helpful. And the result of such conversation is that the smell of the garments—that is, the influence of the whole life—is fragrant and refreshing, like a breath from the forests of Lebanon.

It is a very suggestive and beautiful object-lesson which we are to study. If we enter upon it and pursue it with earnest, candid hearts, it will surely be as profitable as it is interesting.

We have first specified here, that the tongue is a significant factor in the general influence of a life, and that the first characteristic of a tongue which tends to produce a fragrant life is that it is a honey-tongue. This is to distinguish it,

doubtless, from several other kinds of tongues which are altogether too common in society.

For instance, there is the peppery tongue. How a peppery tongue can keep a whole house-full, or car-full, or church-full, smarting! Some people seem to feel that it is necessary always to keep their bristles up and the tongue peppered in order to be considered manly and independent. They imagine if a person is kind and sweet-tempered and patient, especially if it be a man, that there must be something the matter with him, not exactly square—must be two-faced. But that does not follow by any means. Of course nobody likes a wishy-washy individual, whose opinion or conversation is simply a weak copy of the last man he was with.

One of the most remarkable plants in the whole vegetable kingdom is that known to botanists as the *Justicia picta*, which has also been well named the “caricature plant.” At first sight it appears to be a heavy, large-leaved plant, with purple blossoms, chiefly remarkable for the light-yellow centers of its dark-green leaves. When one first sees this odd plant, he is astonished with the fact that it seems to be “making faces” at him. This curious shrub occupies itself in growing up in ridiculous caricatures of the

human face, until at last it stands covered, from the topmost leaf down, with the queerest faces imaginable, the flesh-colored profiles standing out in strong relief against the dark green of the leaves. Some people are like that plant. But neither the sharp, peppery tongue nor the "mealy mouth" of the human "caricature plant" is to be desired.

The chameleon and the porcupine met one day, and compared notes. The chameleon tried to agree with everybody. He was a mirror of the ideas and opinions of all he met, and yet he was not popular. The porcupine bristled all over whenever anybody came near him. He was as full of self-assertion as a shoe-brush is of bristles. One could n't deny that he always presented sharp points, and yet nobody seemed to appreciate or admire him.

"What is the matter with the world," they said, "that it doesn't like either one of us? If the chameleon doesn't suit it, the porcupine should. And if it is not pleased with the porcupine's bristling, it ought to be with the chameleon's amiability and complacence." Silly beasts! They did not know that people despise both the changeling and the bully.

The true man, governed by Christian spirit,

has opinions of his own, and is ready to state and defend them on all proper occasions. He respects the opinions of others, and does not roll himself up in a ball of self-conceit and say to everybody that comes near: "If you touch me, I'll stick a pin in you." I am often reminded of a man who was always boasting that he had more backbone than his neighbors. He was ready at all times to fight with those who differed from him. One day, after he had stuck out his quills as usual, an old white-haired man said to him: "John, you remind me of a hedgehog. Because it has a very weak backbone, nature has covered it with dangerous bristles. It can roll itself up like a piece of india-rubber, and then its sharp spines stick out in all directions. Animals who have really strong backbones never have any bristles. The man who is always boasting of his courage is, as a rule, an arrant coward. He wants to conceal his sense of moral weakness by bluster and bravado." And the old man was right.

Two Scotchmen emigrated in the early days to California. Each thought to take with him some memorial of his beloved country. The one of them, an enthusiastic lover of Scotland, took with him a thistle, the national emblem.

The other took a small swarm of honey-bees. Years have passed. The Pacific Coast is cursed with the Scotch thistle, which the farmers have found it impossible to exterminate. On the other hand, the forests and the caves on the rocky mountain sides, are full of wild bees, whose stores of honey have been a great blessing to the pioneers of that country. So every one of us may carry about a sharp, peppery tongue, that shall annoy and curse like a thistle, or one full of the honey of kindness, sympathy, and love, that will be a benediction to all who know us.

Then, there is a vinegar tongue. It is a sour tongue, but it is very likely to be caused, in the first place, by the peppery tongue; or rather it is a second form, an advanced stage, of the disease. Vinegar is produced by heat. Heat produces ferment, and after awhile the sweetest article under such an influence gets to be the sourest. So it is that by nursing the little heating, peppery annoyances, that come to any of us who are willing to let them in, the tongue gets sour.

“There’s many a trouble
Would break like a bubble,
And into the waters of Lethe depart,
Did we not rehearse it,
And tenderly nurse it,
And give it a permanent place in the heart.

There's many a sorrow
Would vanish to-morrow,
Were we but willing to furnish the wings;
But, sadly intruding,
And quietly brooding,
It hatches out all sorts of horrible things."

The sour tongue is a terrible foe to a happy home. It makes awful havoc sometimes among the children. God have mercy on children who, when they grow up and go out to fight the fierce battles of the world, have to look back on a soured and morose home-life! Let the home be sweet. Let it be full of honey for parents and children. The vinegar tongue makes havoc in the business world as well as in the home. There is no lubricating oil so good as honey on the tongue in solving economic questions. Let me give you a single illustration. A firm, which I knew about a few years ago, was in rather hard straits. It was a large printing establishment. The manager was a good, straightforward Christian man. The time mentioned was along in the middle of the summer.

The managing proprietor sat down and addressed a circular to each one of his employees, stating in substance that the business was not rendering satisfactory results. Whether it resulted from too high wages or not, he could not

tell, but he asked each one to try and make his work count for as much as possible in the hope of proving that the usual way of cutting down wages was not always necessary. An immediate improvement followed the issue of the circular. The men were more cheerful, and appeared to take greater interest in the welfare of the business. There was less waste of material. Gas was turned off more promptly when not needed. And when the trial sheet was completed the next April, there was a great improvement shown in the result of the business. While the improvement was not wholly due to the hands, trade having generally become better, it was evidently due in part to them.

In view of the satisfactory results thus obtained from the good-will and extra exertion of his employees, the proprietor issued another circular wherein his appreciation found expression in a practical form. He reduced by one hour a day the work of all, without reduction of pay, and advanced the wages of the foreman and some others, although he was paying fully as large wages as any of his competitors. I recommend, both to employer and employees, honey on the tongue as the best possible way of conducting business.

But there is no place where a vinegar tongue is such a terror as in the Church. Let a Church become aroused and excited over some special matter until definite parties are developed, and there grow to be contentions among them, and there will be vinegar in the religion of the sour-est kind, and plenty of it. It has almost grown into a proverb that "there is no quarrel like a Church quarrel," because there is no vinegar so sour as religious vinegar. But religious vinegar never attracts sinners.

Once in a country district in England where bee-keeping was largely carried on, a Church was started and sustained by honey. Instead of subscribing so many shillings or pence a week, each family subscribed so many pounds of honey a week. What a lovely Church that must have been! But the system will work very well if added on to our own. Every member of the Church ought to feel himself under sacred obligation to furnish his proportion of the honey to sweeten the social and spiritual life of the congregation.

Then, there is the swollen tongue. It is usually caused by an overgrowth of selfishness. Two peddlers meet in a narrow street. One is a big man with a wheelbarrow, and the other is a

boy, also with a wheelbarrow. "Out of my way!" shouts the man, with a look and a tone that adds plainly enough, "I will make you do so, if you don't do it willingly." So, with groans and struggling, the boy manages to get his heavy load of oranges lifted half up on the curbstone, leaving the path clear for the big burly tyrant. But this "out of the way" order runs through all our business life, wherever the strong drives the weak to the wall. We need to watch ourselves constantly to keep from becoming selfish tyrants toward those who are weaker than we.

The swollen tongue often destroys the happiness of home-life, breaks the sweet communion which ought ever to exist between husband and wife. A recent writer, who subscribes himself "A Graduate in the University of Matrimony," urges us to make the most of the happiness of marriage, and the least of its vexations, by the thought that this relation can not last long. Over the triple doorways of the white marble cathedral of Milan, there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath is the legend, "All that which pleases is only for a moment." Over the other is a sculptured cross, and there are the words, "All

that which troubles is but for a moment." Over the great central entrance, in the middle aisle, is the inscription, "That only is which is eternal."

How kindly should husbands and wives use each other when they think of the brevity of life! Mr. Froude assures us that Thomas Carlyle never meant to be unkind to his wife; but in his late years he thought that he had sacrificed her health and happiness in his absorption in his work; that he had been negligent, inconsiderate, and selfish; and for many years after she had left him, when he passed the spot where she was last seen alive, he would bare his gray head, even in the wind and rain, his features wrung with unavailing sorrow, exclaiming: "O if I could but see her for five minutes, to assure her that I really cared for her throughout all that! But she never knew it, she never knew it!"

Ah! brothers and sisters, let us not be plaiting scourges for ourselves. "These hurrying days, these busy, anxious, shrewd, ambitious times of ours, are worse than wasted when they take our hearts away from patient gentleness, and give us fame for love, and gold for kisses. Some day, when our hungry souls seek for bread,

our selfish god will give us a stone. Life is not a deep, profound, perplexing problem; it is a simple, easy lesson, such as any child may read. You can not find its solution in the ponderous tomes of the old fathers, the philosophers, or the theorists. It is not on your book-shelves; but in the warmest corner of the most unlettered heart, it glows in letters that the blind may read—a sweet, plain, simple, easy, loving lesson.” And if you will learn it, home, business, church, and all life about you, will be the happier and the better for it.

Then, there is the tainted tongue. Every thing it touches loses its freshness, its sweetness, and its purity. It is to be shunned as you would shun a contagion. The grape-growers in California have an ingenious contrivance. They have what they call a “frost-bell,” which is the means of saving many thousands of tons of grapes in the northern portion of California, where the frost sometimes does so much damage. It consists of wires running from different parts of the vineyard to the house. On the vineyard end of these wires is an apparatus that rings a bell at the house when the thermometer descends to a certain degree. When the bell is let off, the occupants of the house know that their vines are in danger

and immediately repair to the vineyard, and light fires in different quarters, and thus prevent, through the agency of this electrical device, the loss of much of the most delicious fruit that grows on the Pacific Coast.

We need to keep our thoughts and purposes so sensitive to the spirit of righteousness that the cold breath of an impure tongue will ring all the alarm-bells of conscience at its first approach. One of the best anecdotes I ever heard of General Grant was one related by General Clinton B. Fisk, who said he was once sitting with the general and a number of others, when an officer high in rank rushed in. "O boys, I've such a good story to tell you! There are no ladies present, I believe?" "No; but there are gentlemen present," was the curt reply of Grant. The story was not told.

There is another characteristic of a Christian tongue which we must not overlook. It is a milk tongue. It not only pleases the palate, it feeds also. In contrast to a gossipy, frivolous, chalk-and-water tongue, it is a genuine milk tongue.

The frivolous, personal, gossipy grade of the average conversation among good people who mean no harm, is to be greatly deplored. Many

of the bitter slanders which cause so much sorrow, start not in malice, but in this frivolous sort of conversation. The whole plane of conversation needs lifting up, in many circles. It is one of the most important duties of the Christian of to-day to help in this matter by personal example. Some poet sings:

"Men ask, 'What news?' and book and paper scan
 For 'latest tidings' of their fellow-man;
 And each new bit of floating gossip read,
 And still as eager, search for more with greed.
 News more important one can never find—
 News that informs and satisfies the mind—
 As tidings of one's self. Where, in the line
 Of things progressive, is this soul of mine?
 Where, midst the whirl, the jar, the hum of life,
 Its dull routine, or never ending strife
 Of man with fellow-man, my place I hold?
 'News' more 'important' never can be told.
 What was my last best thought? What new desire
 Or new ambition doth my soul inspire?
 What is my sounding in life's treach'rous stream?
 What speed is making? Is there yet a gleam
 Of light that sparkles on the distant shore?
 Are dangers near? Was that the breaker's roar?
 How heads the bark? What headlands are in view?
 Such tidings to my soul are always new;
 And such my interested soul decides
 Are more 'important news' than all besides."

Conversation ought to be made more earnest. I am convinced that most Christians indulge too little in direct religious conversation. How often

Christian people—those who are seeking to know perfectly the will of God—meet one another, and yet, during a long conversation, the subject of religion enters no way into their exchange of thought. I am sure we rob ourselves very greatly in this. We might often kindle into life and flame the smoking flax of Christian devotion by free and friendly conversation with each other. It is related of Bishop Ussher and Dr. Preston, that always before they parted one would say to the other: “Come, good Doctor, let us talk now a little of Jesus Christ.” Or the Doctor said: “Come, my Lord Bishop, let me hear your grace talk of the goodness of God with your wonted eloquence; let us warm each other’s hearts with heaven, that we may the better bear this cold world.”

To be able to be of use to the world by the sweet and helpful influence of our conversation, we must hold frequent converse with heaven; “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

It is related that when General Charles George Gordon was in the Soudan, there was each morning one half-hour during which there lay outside the closed door of his tent a white handkerchief. The whole camp knew the full sig-

nificance of the small token, and most religiously was it respected by all there, whatever was their color, creed, or business. No foot dared to enter the tent so guarded. No message, however pressing, was carried in. Whatever it was, of life or death, it had to wait until the guardian signal was removed. Every one knew that God and Gordon were alone in there together; that the servant prayed and communed, and that the Master heard and answered. Into the heart so opened the presence of God came down and filled his life with strange power, because his heart was the dwelling-place of God. So your tongue will abound in milk with which to feed hungry souls, when you daily hold communion with Him who speaks "as never man spake."

Finally, we have only time to note for a moment the result of such a conversation upon the general influence of the life itself. This is expressed in a very beautiful picture painted in the words, "The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon." The beauty of the illustration will grow upon you by reflection. Lebanon was noted for its great cedar-forest. Were you ever, on a summer day, permitted to stroll through a forest of heaven-aspiring cedar-trees, reaching out their branches far and wide; the sunshine

sprinkling down here and there through the leaves; squirrels chattering up near the trunks of the trees, cracking their nuts between their paws, while they cracked jokes at each other; birds singing, and building their nests as they sing in the shady, overhanging boughs; and above all, and glorifying all, the fragrance, sweet and invigorating, giving you new life and hope as you took long draughts into your refreshed lungs? Brother, in the heart of God there is a picture of you and of me, like that. Not a poor, sickly, stunted, dwarfed plant. God sees in us the possibility of becoming like the great cedars, full of shade and comfort and fragrance for every weary and tired brother or sister who passes our way.

There is only one way to be sure that the garments will smell sweet, and that is to give them an abundance of heavenly sunshine. How soon Lebanon, with its great cedars, would have been covered with moss and mold and unwholesome vapors, if the sun had ceased to shine upon it! So only the sunshine reflected from the face of Jesus Christ can keep fresh and sweet our human lives.

A visitor went one cold day to see a poor girl, kept at home by a lame hip. The room was on

the north side of a bleak house. It was not pleasant without, and in many ways was very cheerless within. Poor girl! she seemed to have very little to cheer and comfort her, and as the visitor entered the room, the first thought was: "If she had only a sunny room on the south side of the house!" Thinking of this, her visitor said: "You never have any sun; not a ray comes into these windows. Sunshine is everything. I wish you could have a little." "O," the young girl answered, "my Sun pours in at every window, and even through the cracks. All the light I want is Jesus. He shines in here, and makes everything bright to me." And no one could doubt her who saw the sweet smile of happiness on her upturned face. Yes! Jesus "the Sun of righteousness," shining in, can make any spot beautiful and any home happy. That sunshine can make your lips to drop sweetness as the honeycomb, your tongue to yield both honey and milk, and the smell of your garments to be like the smell of Lebanon.

III.

THE THIRST OF LIFE AND ITS SATISFACTION.

"Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not."—JOHN IV, 15.

THIS is the climax to the story of a poor, sinful woman, who found Christ and salvation through the doorway of a simple kindness to a weary, thirsty, wayside traveler.

There is in Italy a fountain, over which is the statue of a beggar drinking at a spring. It is called "The Beggar's Fountain," and this is its story: Once upon a time there lived a very proud and haughty man who hated the poor, and set himself above all the world who were not as wealthy and well dressed as himself, and his want of charity was so great that it had become proverbial. A beggar would no more have thought of asking bread at his gate than of asking him for his fortune.

There was a spring on his land, a sweet spring of cold water, and it was the only one for miles. Many a wayfarer paused to drink at it, but was never permitted to do so. A servant was kept upon the watch to drive such persons away. Now, there had never been known before any one

so avaricious as to refuse a cup of cold water to his fellow-men, and the angels, talking among themselves, could not believe it. One of them said to the rest:

“It is impossible for any but Satan himself! I will go to earth, and prove that it is not true.”

And so this fair and holy angel disguised herself as a beggar-woman, covered her golden hair with a black hood, and chose the moment when the master of the house was himself standing near the spring to come slowly up the road, and to pause beside the fountain, and humbly ask for a draught of its sweet water.

Instantly the servant who guarded the spot refused; but the angel, desiring to take news of a good deed, not of an evil one, back to heaven, went up to the master himself, and said:

“I am, as you see, a wanderer from afar. See how poor are my garments, how stained from travel! It is not surely at your bidding that your servant forbids me to drink; and even as it is, I pray you bid him let me drink, for I am very thirsty.”

The rich man looked at her with scornful eyes, and said:

“This is not a public fountain; you will find one in the next village.”

"The way is long," pleaded the angel, "and I am a woman, and weak."

"Drive her away!" said the rich man, and as he spoke the beggar turned; but on the instant her black hood dropped from her head, and revealed floods of rippling golden hair; her unseemly rags fell to the ground, and the shimmering robes that angels wear shone in their place. For a moment she hovered, poised on purple wings, with her hands folded on her bosom, and ineffable sweetness of sorrow in her eyes; then, with a gush of music and a flood of perfume, she vanished.

The servant fell to the earth like one dead. The rich man trembled and cried out; for he knew he had forbidden a cup of cold water to an angel, and a horror possessed his soul.

Almost instantly a terrible thirst fell upon him, which nothing could assuage. In vain he drank wines, sherbets, draughts of all pleasing kinds. Nothing could slake his thirst. The sweet water of the spring was saltier to him than the sea. He who never in his life had known an ungratified desire, now experienced the torture of an ever-unsatisfied longing; but through this misery he began to understand what he had done. He repented his cruelty to the poor;

alms were given daily at his gate; charity was the business of his life. The fountain was no longer guarded, and near it hung a cup ready for any one who chose to use it; but the curse, if curse it was, was not lifted.

The rich man—young when the angel visited him—grew middle-aged, elderly, old, still tortured by this awful thirst, despite his prayers and repentance. He had broken bread for the most miserable beggars who came to his door.

And at eighty years of age, bowed with years of infirmity and weary of his life, he sat beside the fountain weeping; and lo! along the road he saw approaching a beggar-woman, hooded in black, and walking over the stones with bare feet. Slowly she came, and paused beside the fountain.

“May I drink?” she asked.

“There is none to forbid thee,” said the old man, trembling. “Drink, poor woman. Once an angel was forbidden here, but that time has passed. Drink, and pray for one athirst. Here is the cup.”

The woman knelt over the fountain and filled the cup; but instead of putting it to her own lips, she presented it to those of the old man.

“Drink, then,” she cried, “and thirst no more!”

The old man took the cup and emptied it. O, blessed draught! With it the torture of years departed, and as he drank it he praised Heaven; and, lifting his eyes once more, he saw the beggar's hood drop to the ground, and her rags fall in pieces. For a moment she stood revealed in all her beauty of golden hair and silvery raiment. She stretched her hand toward him as if in blessing, and then, rising, vanished in the skies. A strain of music lingered, a perfume filled the air, and those who came there soon after found the old man praying beside the spring.

Before he died he built the fountain from which the spring gushes, and it has been given to the poor forever.

Such is the story of "The Beggar's Fountain," and it, as well as the story of Jacob's Well, ought to lead us to value every opportunity of serving the Master in the person of our brothers and sisters.

We have suggested in our study the unsatisfying nature of worldly things. Men who have drunk the cup of worldly ambition—whether of riches or power or pleasure—to the very dregs, have found yet within them something which, like the two daughters of the horse-leech, spoken of in Proverbs, continues to cry, "Give! give!"

Many another debauchee, like Belshazzar, has had all the intoxicating pleasure of the feast driven away by the handwriting on the wall.

Chrysostom tells the story of a prisoner who said: "O, if I had but liberty, I would desire no more!" He had it, and then cried: "If I had enough for necessity, I would desire no more." He had it, and then cried: "Had I a little for variety, I would desire no more." He had it, and then cried: "Had I any office, were it the meanest, I would desire no more." He had it, and cried again: "Had I but a magistracy, though over one town only, I would desire no more." He had it, and then sighed: "Were I but a prince, I would desire no more." He had it, and then sighed: "Were I but a king, I would desire no more." He had it, and then cried: "Were I but an emperor, I would desire no more." He had it, and then exclaimed: "Were I but ruler of the whole world, I would then desire no more." He had it, and then he sat down, as Alexander, and wept that there were no more worlds for him to possess. And if any man could enjoy the possession of the whole world it could not satisfy him who is the son of God. Man's longing is fully satisfied in Christ. Christ satisfies us by giving us of the fountain of life

and peace. In us, and not outside of us, is the real source of joy or sorrow. As St. Bernard said, "Nothing can work me damage but myself;" and again:

"Man hath no faults except past deeds;
No hell but what he makes."

Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is within you;" so, too, is the kingdom of hell. Heaven or hell—our reward or our punishment—is just this:

"All that total of a soul
Which is the things it did, the thoughts it had.
Alone, each for himself, must we reckon with
The fixed arithmetic of the universe,
Which meteth good for good, ill for ill,
Measure for measure, unto deeds, words, thoughts,
Making one future grow from all the past."

It is from the fountain that is within us we must find the water that shall slake our thirst. It is said of Count D'Orsay, in some ways the most brilliant man of a brilliant age, that, so bright and happy was his temperament, he never knew a moment's *ennui*, and was as much interested in the dullest country town as in London at the height of the season. The resources within himself were always sufficient to fill life full of interest.

Professor Charles Eliot Norton says of his

friend James Russell Lowell, that he never grew old. The spirit of youth was invincible in him. Life battered at the defenses of youth with heavy artillery of trial and sorrow, but they did not yield. When he was sixty-two years old he declared that the figures were misplaced, and that they should read twenty-six. In one of the last years of his life, as he was passing a hospital for incurable children, turning to his companion, he said: "There's where they'll send me one of these days." He was in his sixty ninth year when he wrote:

"But life is sweet, though all that makes it sweet
Lessen, like sounds of friends' departing feet.
For me Fate gave, whate'er she else denied,
A nature sloping to the southern side."

And to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, in whose hearts he causes to spring up a fountain of life, God grants the sunshine of the southern slope, and every morning renews for him the daily miracle—the youth of the world within and without. Such a soul can sing, with the poet:

"God has given me a song—
A song of trust;
And I sing it all day long;
For sing I must.

Every hour it sweeter grows,
Keeps my soul in blest repose;
Just how restful no one knows
But those who trust.

O, I sing it on the mountain,
In the light,
Where the radiance of God's sunshine
Makes all bright.
All my path seems bright and clear,
Heavenly land seems very near,
And I almost do appear
To walk by sight.

And I sing it in the valley,
Dark and low,
When my heart is crushed with sorrow,
Pain, and woe.
Then the shadows flee away,
Like the night when dawns the day;
Trust in God brings light away—
I find it so.

When I sing it in the desert,
Parched and dry,
Living streams begin to flow—
A rich supply;
Verdure in abundance grows,
Deserts blossom like a rose,
And my heart with gladness glows,
At God's reply."

Not only are we ourselves blessed in such a richness of soul, but, like the woman of Samaria, we forget our water-pots, and carry the news of spiritual life to our friends and neighbors. How

characteristic of our holy religion to see this woman, in the first flush of her new-found hope and faith in Christ, hurrying away into the town to tell the men whom she met in the street about the Messiah, and arouse their interest and attention until they go out and find him for themselves! I would to God that every member of this Church would follow this woman's example! Let me put the question straight home to your heart: Are you doing your duty to your neighbor who is not a Christian?

“He walks beside you in the street—
The crowded street of commonplace—
And does but glance into your face
A moment, when you chance to meet;
But eyes made wise by love can see,
However swift his steps may be,
He carries with him everywhere
A weight of care.

You have your burden, too; but yet
It does not press at all sometimes,
And you can hear the heavenly chimes,
And so the weary way forget.
You have a Friend your griefs to share,
And listen to your softest prayer;
You know how safely they abide
For whom Christ died!

But he has found it hard to trust;
For life is hard and rough to him,
The skies above his head are dim,
And his work lies along the dust.

Small hope has he to cheer his way,
Nor light of love to make his day;
No heavenly music meets his ears
Through all the years.

He is your brother—give him love!
Destroy not him for whom Christ died,
By tyranny, neglect, or pride.
Within the Father's house above
Is room for him and you; and here
You well may hold your brother dear,
Nor make the space between you wide,
For whom Christ died.

O, greet your brother in the street
With friendly smile and helping hand;
Give him his portion in the land;
Be good to him whene'er you meet.
It may be through your love that he
The Father's love and care will see;
Then win and keep him by your side,
For whom Christ died."

But I doubt not I speak to some who stand in this woman's place, leaning on the well-curb of earth's pleasures, and wishing you might have the better water that would slake your deep soul-thirst. If so, I pray God you may learn the lesson of her conversion, and see that confession of sin is necessary to salvation. How delicately Jesus leads this woman to open her heart to him!

Rev. B. Fay Mills relates that once, when he was holding evangelistic meetings in Boston, he noticed an old man who had remained through

the first and second meetings, and was standing as though hesitating whether to leave the room or to tarry in order to confer with others. Mr. Mills asked the gentleman who was assisting him to speak to him, and, approaching him, he said:

“My friend, are you a Christian?”

The old man said: “No, sir, I am not a Christian, but I want to be. I have been trying all my life to find out how to be a Christian, but I have n’t been able to receive any satisfaction in connection with my endeavors in that respect. I have been to Church all my life, and read the Bible. I have attended meetings like these, and and yet have received no light as to what I need to do in order to be a Christian. When Mr. Moody was here, several years ago, I attended almost all of his meetings, and talked with him and others personally, and when the meetings were done, I was as far away as ever. Now, I don’t suppose it is of any use, but I would be very glad if you would tell me what I need to do in order that I might become a Christian.”

The gentleman said to him: “Have you ever confessed Christ with your lips?”

The old man said: “No; I have been waiting to become a Christian before I should do that.”

"That is just the way to become a Christian;" and the worker quoted a passage from Paul's letter to the Romans, which says: "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." After quoting this Scripture the Christian man said: "I believe you need to commence to-night, with an open acknowledgment of Christ as your Master."

The old man said: "It is too late to do it to-night, for the service has been dismissed."

The gentleman looked about the room, where there were about a dozen persons tarrying, and said: "Suppose you confess Christ to these people who are now in this room."

After a moment's hesitation, the old man walked down the room, and held out his hand to a man whom he knew, and said: "Mr. W., I want to confess Christ to you;" and then he went to others and said practically the same thing. At last he came to Mr. Mills, who told him not to let the adversary make him think that he had not commenced the Christian life

that night, but to count the matter settled, and to think of himself as a follower of Christ.

The next morning, at the opening of the ten o'clock service, the old gentleman was seated on the front seat, and with him was another man about seventy-five years of age. The first man came to Mr. Mills, and said:

"I have brought a friend to the meeting this morning. He is a little hard of hearing. Will you please speak out so that he can hear; and be sure to say something about confessing Christ. I found the light that way, and I want my friend here to confess Christ, too."

Before the day was done, the second old man had risen in the meeting to express his intention of being a follower of Christ; and after that it was a joy to see the two old men, side by side, with their faces beaming with the satisfaction that was brought to them by their new life.

If there are any here to-night who have all their lifetime known the story of Christ and his love and sacrifice for them, and yet have never openly confessed him as their Savior, I hope you will not go away from the house to-night without an open, frank, grateful confession of your great debt to him. Accept him, here and now, as your personal Savior.

IV.

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHRISTIAN.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, *in this present age.*” (Marginal rendering.)—TITUS II, 11-12.

THIS first sentence is like the trump of jubilee; it is the pæan of Christianity: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” It is as triumphant as the springtime in its conquest over the winter; when sunshine and showers and caressing winds manifest the grace of God toward the earth; that bringeth springtime and summer to hill and valley and forest. So, in the coming of Jesus Christ to the world and in the preaching of his gospel, the grace of God, that bringeth salvation from sin, hath appeared unto all men.

There are three great elements of a strong, full life given in this Scripture. The first is sobriety.

It is declared that we are taught to live soberly. This has relation to one's own self. It

means that I am to take my life as an intense, earnest reality; regard it as something of importance, worth caring for and guarding with the greatest fidelity. Our estimate of the value or importance of our human living depends upon the measure we put on ourselves. I do not mean some petty egotism or conceit, but the estimate we have of human life; whether it be insignificant, or large and splendid; whether we think of ourselves as human animals struggling for a day, or children of God, building for the eternities.

The sober life regards the divinity within itself, and is unshackled from the narrow, cruel slaveries of fashion. The soul that is truly free and enlarged by a just conception of its own supreme worth will create its own conditions. It levels the walls of conventionalism, as Joshua, with seven blasts of a ram's horn, overthrew the walls of Jericho.

Carlyle said that the true meaning of life is to unfold one's self. What unsuspected resources lie hidden away in many of our souls as the gold-mines are hidden in the quartz of the great mountains, unknown and unsuspected for thousands of years! It is the glory of our divine Christianity that it is forever fighting against

the mere huddling together of men and women like sheep, but teaches that each one of us is, distinctly and personally, the child of God. This clearly-defined individuality gives character to any age. The laws of society are never so sacred as the laws of one's own being. Some one says: "However mean your life is, meet and live it; do not shun it and call it bad names. Love your life, poor as it is."

To be one's own self, living in an atmosphere of God's care and presence, is a thousand times better than being an imitation of anybody that ever lived. Who would change the ugliest face that any man or woman ever carried for a painted mask? There has not been in all history, perhaps, a homelier face than Abraham Lincoln's; neither has there been one more universally trusted and loved. He who is faithful and obedient to that divine spark of personality which God has given to him, may brave all the opposition of the world, and may even turn his foes to good account. Clarinda, when cast into the jungle by Arsetes, was suckled by a tiger; and so the tigers, that seem to thirst for your blood, will become your nursing mothers when, with all frankness and self-devotion, you abandon yourself to be the true child of God.

The second characteristic of this new, strong life is righteousness. It is specially stated that we are to live righteously.

This has relation to our fellow-men. The well-rounded man is one who first takes his own manhood seriously, does not believe that God made him to be a mere copy of somebody else; and in relation to his fellows, he is righteous; that is, he holds himself rightly toward them. He does the right in dealing with them. In deciding what his attitude to his neighbor is to be, his first and last question, all decisive, is, What is right? Having found that, he seeks no farther. His life is thus open and transparent.

In the cathedral of St. Mark's in Venice—in many ways one of the most beautiful buildings in the world, and lustrous with an Oriental splendor that is beyond all description—there are several pillars that are said to have been brought from Solomon's temple. They are of alabaster, a substance that is as firm and durable as granite, but is so transparent that the light glows through them. Our lives should be lived so righteously; they should be so open and frank, so ignorant of tortuous and deceptive ways, that we shall not only be strong pillars in the temple of our God and in the Church on earth, but

shall be so transparent and open-hearted that the Sun of righteousness, shining on us, may glow through us to enlighten the world.

The third element which enters into this ideal life which is described in our text is godliness. We are to live godly lives.

This has regard to our religion, to our relation to God. The full-rounded Christian man stands not only in his right relation to his fellows respecting his own nature, but he stands in harmonious relation to God. He lives not only soberly and righteously, but godly—trusting not in his own righteousness, but in humility accepting the righteousness of Jesus Christ which God has prepared.

See how Paul puts it in the third chapter of Philippians: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." How important is this right relation to God! The illustrations

are everywhere. A branch must be in right relation to the vine, or it will not bear fruit.

If you apply to have your life insured, the physician who examines you inquires, not only into your present condition and concerning any sickness you may have had, but he wants to know about your relations. He makes inquiry concerning your parents. If they are dead, he wants to know when and of what they died, and also about your brothers and sisters. He does not judge your case simply on its own merits, but takes into it your relation to the family stock in which you are found, and will put to your credit any good qualities that are found in it, or condemn you, however strong you may be, by setting to your discredit any diseased conditions that are found in your parentage. So God estimates us in relation to himself and to his Son Jesus Christ. Shall we not seriously ask ourselves this morning, each one for himself, What is my relation to God?

We are to live soberly toward ourselves, righteously toward our wives and children, our neighbors, our employers or our employees, and in humble faith and obedience to God here and now. But the thought that I intended should leave its impress on all my message in the

closing phrase of the Scripture we are studying: "*In this present age*," in the city of Brooklyn, in the year of our Lord 1894.

An essential part of the Christian life is its relation to its own time. It must be a life in this world as well as a life in eternity. I fear that many people lose the keen edge of these great Scriptures by somehow relegating them to a different age and time. They think it was all right for Paul to talk about living soberly, righteously, and godly, in those old times of his, but that it is impracticable to expect such a thing to-day. They say to themselves, "Would the apostle have said this if he had lived now? Is this a good time for a sober, righteous life? Can a man expect to be a man of this present age, moved by its tendencies, marked by its traits, and yet with a well-rounded Christian character?" A recent writer says that it is right here we meet one of the most common and most enfeebling heresies of our own time—the impression that this is not a good time for a sober, righteous, and godly life; a sort of letting down of one's soul to agree that the spirit of the age is against these things. "Business standards," it is said, "are relaxing, home habits loose,

self-seeking the common rule, plain living and high thinking not the custom of the time."

In such a state of mind two things seem possible. One is to yield to the pressure of the age, and change our standards so that they are inconsistent with the Christian life, and which the conscience can never approve. We see that realized in daily life all about us. That is the common worldliness of the present age. The other thing which some people try to do is to run away from the age. Thousands of the choicest souls have been doing that throughout all Christian history. They have thought it impossible to live a sober life against the current of wickedness surrounding them, and so they have fled from its influence, hiding themselves in monasteries, and peopling the desert with their hermit caves. No one can survey the story of these ascetics and hermits without a glow of admiration. It is a great thing that the enticements of each age which have overpowered so many souls have been powerless over a few. But none the less this whole story is not the story of a battle, but of a flight. These people were simply afraid of their own times, while the great body of men had to fight the battle without them.

It was a flight based not on faith, but on faithlessness, on the doctrine that God had deserted his world, and that to find him they must desert it also. And it was a fruitless flight. Fleeing from the world, they fled from all the chance they had to make it better.

A traveler, writing in the *Christian Register* not long since, says he once stood on a little point of the Upper Nile where the first Christian hermit gathered his first disciples. Among those drifting sand-hills, in rude caves and dens, once lived a thousand holy men and women, drawn from the wealth, beauty, and learning of the world; and now, as one stands there, there is nothing left to show for all their Christian impulses and dreams. No monument of charity; no contribution to learning; no noble church, hospital, or school,—nothing done to redeem the time in which they lived remains for their memorial. The traveler stands there in a vast solitude, and sees across the ocean of sand nothing but the rippled surface of their unnumbered graves.

Surely, then, it is a pertinent question that if the sober, righteous, and godly man is not to yield himself to the present age and become its victim, or not to flee from it, what is he to do?

The answer is very simple. It comes alike from Scripture, from history, from present observation, and from the depths of every normal conscience. He is to use the present age—to take it just as it is—as the material out of which he is to develop a Christian character fit for this day in which we live. Here is a potter working in his clay. It is a coarse material, and his hands grow soiled in molding it; but he neither rejects it because it is not clean, nor dabbles in it like a child for the mere sake of getting dirty. He takes it just as it is, and works out the shapes of beauty which are possible under the laws and limitations of the clay.

This present age in which we live furnishes us material just like that. It is not very clean. In business there are shams, humbugs, oppressions, cruelties, and frauds that make every true man boil with indignation again and again; but the business of the world is not to be given over to the devil because of that. In society there are hypocrisies, impurities, and scandals from which every true man and woman revolts. In both business and society there are things that are soiling to one's touch; and if that is true there, what must one say about politics, after the stench of Tammany Hall has filled the atmos-

phere with a malaria more deadly than any pestilient swamp,—politics, with its greed, with its struggling, bribing trusts from sugar to whisky, and from matches to standard oil; politics, where Legislatures and Congresses have seemed, on many occasions in recent years, to have no sense of decency, and no motive save personal greed?

Surely, here are things in business and society and politics, that soil the fingers. What is the duty of Christian men and women under such circumstances? The teaching of our text is plain. It is their duty to live godly, sober, righteous lives in the midst of all that is evil in this present age of our own. We are not to wash our hands of the age, nor yet to surrender to its evil. We are to take hold upon the very conditions of this age as the material out of which to mold a new type of moral beauty. It is easy enough to run away from the tendencies of our own time, and it is easier still to yield to its evil; but to be in the world, yet not of it, putting a strong, clean hand upon business, on society, or politics, molding its material, yet not defiled by it,—that is the real problem of the present age, and one has said that here lies a new type of Christian character. The saints of the past have been, for the most part, those who have fled from

the world; but the Christian saint of to-day is the person who can use the world and master it for the glory of God.

Such a person may be all unconscious that he is doing anything heroic. He is simply the man in the business world who, amid looseness and dishonor, keeps himself true and clean. The woman, amid luxury and affectation, and the poor shams of social life, with its heartless cruelties, who keeps her sympathy and her simplicity. It is a harder thing to do these things than to be a hermit, and fully as noble as to be a saint. It is the sober, righteous, and godly life lived amidst this present age.

The world needs just that type of Christianity. As one looks out over these great cities, and beholds everywhere the selfishness and wickedness which seem to wither many green trees of promise, leaving only the barren sand of worldliness, it is as if one stood beside some great Western plain, with its ashy-looking plateau soil, and its monotonous greasewood clumps here and there, seeming to have no possibilities for the production of real agricultural growth; but, after all, that wide-stretching, monotonous plain, burning under the hot sun, is only waiting for the shrewd and devoted engineer who shall

bring from far-off mountain cañons the water that shall irrigate its dry and barren plains, saturating the soil and making the wide-reaching plateau to become, like Damascus, the garden of the Lord.

So this age, which we look out upon, is like that. There never was a time when so many interests called for consecrated help, and where generous, self-denying self-abandonment for the benefit of humanity counted for so much. This restless, inventive, nervous time of ours, when everybody is an interrogation point; when every one is looking for and expecting something new; when men are breaking over the old ruts in every department of human life,—surely there never could be a time when the water of life, poured out upon the souls of men, could so refresh and comfort them as now. To follow the figure which we have been using, we who trust God, and love him, and want to do his will and bring about his kingdom upon the earth, must climb the lofty mountain-tops and keep in close communion with heaven.

In secret prayer, in studying God's Word, in holy meditation, we must so prepare our hearts that our lives shall be irrigating streams of

Heaven's benevolence to all the thirsty world about us. And thus we may become the channels of communication between the throne of God and those barren hearts which threaten to make a desert of this present age.

V.

A GREAT DOOR AND MANY ADVERSARIES.

"I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."—I COR. XVI, 8, 9.

THE reason which Paul gives for staying at Ephesus suggests the character of the man. He wanted to stay because there was a great opportunity to fight the devil. A less spiritual man would not have seen the great door which was open for him. A less courageous and faithful man, despite the open door, would have been anxious to run away when he saw the many adversaries confronting him. These are the two great reasons he gives for desiring to remain—an open field, and a great struggle in prospect. They appealed to Paul because his own soul was sensitive to spiritual opportunity. If he had been less alert, he would not have perceived the opportunity at all. It is that alert, sensitive condition of the soul which, above all, we need to pray for and seek to develop in ourselves.

Some one says very truly, "The greatest foe to the Church is dry rot." No opposition from

outside can possibly be so fatal to vigorous spiritual life within us as indifference and lethargy of soul on our own part. A lack of interest brings paralysis and death. The Savior declared that where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. It is also true that where the heart is, there will the treasure follow, and it is a very fair judgment to measure our interest in any cause by the amount of earnest activity which we give to it. If our hearts are all aglow with devotion to Christ, an opportunity for work for him in the salvation of souls will arouse our enthusiasm and draw our devoted attention, as Franklin's kite drew the lightning from the threatening clouds.

If, like Paul, we are seeking for open doors where we may proclaim the glad message of salvation, the Holy Spirit will be able to direct us, and we shall be susceptible to his guidance. Alas! too many times our minds and hearts are so filled with worldly ambitions that the din of the world's noise drowns the still small voice that would speak to our hearts. A traveler relates that during a musical service held last summer in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, it was noticed that the clock apparently did not strike eight. It did strike, however. The reason it did not sound was due to a little forethought.

Bach's "Passion" was being performed in the cathedral. A church-clock has the awkward habit of striking at very inconvenient moments, often entirely spoiling the effect of quiet passages. So some young men mounted the bell-tower, and took the liberty of tying a cushion to the bell-hammer, which thus fell without noise.

So there are many of us who need, above everything else, to have a cushion tied on the bell-hammer of worldly things during the hours of every day which we ought to give to the worship of God and to meditation upon spiritual things. No man can afford to let worldly interests, however important they may be, keep him from such communion with the Throne of Grace that he shall be sensitive to spiritual opportunities from day to day.

"For lacking this no man hath health,
And lacking this no man hath wealth;
For land is trash, and gold is dross,
Success is failure, gain is loss,
Unless there lives in the human soul,
As hither and thither its passions roll,
Toss'd on the waves of this mortal sea,
A hope, and a trust, and a will and a faith,
That is stronger than life, and stronger than death,
And equal to eternity."

Paul says that there was open to him in Ephesus a great door and effectual, but it became ef-

fectual through his own exertions. He made it effectual, because he entered it with devoted courage and confidence in God.

Out on the great Western cattle-ranches the traveler sees, every little while, an ingenious device for watering cattle. An inclined plane leads up to a platform along which a trough extends. Nowhere in sight is there any hint of water, either in well or spring or running brook; but beneath the platform is a living spring connected with the trough by hidden pipes, so arranged that the water will flow only when a heavy weight presses upon the platform.

A thirsty cow comes along, and looks wistfully at the suggestive trough. Alas! it is dry. She goes far enough up the inclined plane to be convinced of the unwelcome fact, and turns reluctantly away. Another comes, a gentle creature, tired and thirsty. She is not turned back by the sight of an empty trough. Perhaps she is saying to herself, "Where there is so nice a trough, there must be water." So she presses boldly forward; and, lo! as she steps full upon the platform, there is a welcome sound of overflowing water, and the trough is filled with the pure stream, all because the persevering cow did not stop at impossibilities, but walked by faith and not

by sight. How many opportunities to do service for God are barren because we do not press toward them with persevering and faithful hearts!

It is only by living in daily communion with God that our eyes are clear to behold opportunities for divine service. If I address any this morning who have once known this communion, but have lost it, and are living lives dull and cold, out of touch with the Holy Spirit, I pray that some message in the sermon this morning may arouse you to a new consecration of yourselves to God.

The president of a city bank who was also a sincere Christian, and one who was ever ready to turn a listening ear to a cry of a soul for light, however pressing his business duties might be, was interrupted one morning by a mechanic of his acquaintance, who entered his office, evidently borne down by a heavy burden. His first remark was, "I am bad off; I'm broke. I must have help." Of course the banker expected to be asked for pecuniary aid. "Tell me what you need. Are you in financial straits?" "Worse than that," was the reply; "I am a spiritual bankrupt;" and tears and sobs shook the strong man as he sat, the personification of grief, in the presence of his friend.

The story he told has its thousands of counterparts. "Myself and wife," said he, "are members of the Church. We have not been inside its walls for a long time. I have drifted out into darkness, and I am at unrest. Will you, can you help me?"

"But tell me the cause of this backsliding. Where did the departure begin, and what has brought you to me in such a condition?"

"Well," said he, "my little girls were at the Sunday-school concert last Sunday. On their return I asked as to the lesson of the evening. Their reply was, 'Prayer,' and turning to me one of the dear pets said, with such an appealing look: 'Papa, you used to pray with us; why don't you now?' This question for three days has sounded in my ears day and night. I can not sleep. I can not rest. What shall I do?"

"Where did you leave off?"

"With the omission of family prayer. At first morning devotions were omitted. I was in haste to get to my work. I excused myself because of the lack of time. Then, at evening, I gradually left off the habit on the plea of weariness, or some other excuse. The neglect of Sabbath service followed, till at last I am here, with no rest, no comfort, no peace. Neither

my myself nor wife has been to Church for months."

The practical answer of the Christian banker was: "Begin where you left off. Commence to-night. Call your family together and pray with them."

"But I can not. It is far harder than at the first."

"Very well; if you will not do this, you will have no rest; and I hope you will continue in this condition till you again resume the duty which you never should have laid aside."

At last the promise was given. What at first was a burden was taken up. Duty soon became a pleasure, and a new spiritual atmosphere soon came to that household.

Are there any representatives of families here this morning who need just this message? Remember that religion, first of all, begins in the individual heart, then in the family life, and afterwards in the Church. A Church made up of families whose homes are temples of the living God, where the incense of love and gratitude goes up to God every day from their loving hearts, is all-powerful in the community. And the individuals going out from such a Christian atmosphere in the home are not only doubly

shielded against temptation and sin, but are keen-eyed to behold open doors into which they may enter as the messengers of Christ.

Perhaps the most suggestive feature of our text is the second reason which Paul gives for remaining in Ephesus; that is, because there are many adversaries. Some who see the open door, and are free to admit the opportunity presented to them for Christian work, are ready to run away because of the adversaries. But difficulties in the way only aroused Paul to greater exertion. If Paul had lived after the days of Isaac Watts, one of his favorite hymns would have been :

"Sure I must fight, if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word.

Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer, though they die:
They see the triumph from afar,
By faith they bring it nigh."

As a brave general feels that the place for himself and his army is in the presence of the enemy, so Paul felt that the place above all others where he was needed was where there were many adversaries against the gospel. All the opposition which was brought against him at Ephesus, as everywhere else, tended to spread

abroad his message, and to further the name and fame of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let no one of us shirk his duty as a witness for Christ because of unpromising surroundings. A witness is most valuable where evidence is scarce, and does more good there than anywhere else.

An English paper relates a very interesting incident of a splendid revival among the police of Birmingham, which was brought about mainly through the faithful efforts of one Christian man on the force. This man served his time first as an ordinary policeman, and after his conversion was so greatly troubled by the sights and sounds of sin among which he was compelled to work, that, for a long time, the constant burden of his own and his wife's prayer was: "Lord, take me out of the police! Give me some other work!" But no answer came, and no other work was opened for him.

One evening he came home, looking very thoughtful, and said to his wife: "Wife, do you know, I think we have been making a great mistake? We have been praying for God to take me out of the force, and I begin to think he has put me there to work for him. Now, I am just going to pray that he will help me to serve him where I am." That was the begin-

ning of a new life, and he began to watch for opportunities of service. He soon became very useful, and was promoted, so that he now is at the head of the detective force of Birmingham. He has a wonderful memory for faces, and hardly ever fails to recognize a person whom he has seen. Not long ago a man asked to see him, and was shown into his private office. Looking at the detective, the visitor said: "Don't you know me?" The detective replied: "Wait a minute, and I'll tell you. Yes, I recollect you. Fourteen years ago I arrested you, and you were tried at the Warwickshire assizes, and got fourteen years' penal servitude. Your name is so-and-so."

"All right," replied the man; "but that is not all. After my sentence, when you had conducted me back to the cell, you waited a minute, and said to me: 'This is a bad job for you, man. You have been serving a bad master, and now you are in for the wages. You will have plenty of time to think now. Will you not come to the Lord, and ask his help to begin a new life? Read your Bible and pray. Give your heart to Christ. It is not too late for a change. Only turn now, and you'll come out a changed man, to lead an honest life.' Then you shook hands

with me, and pleaded so earnestly that I made up my mind, and I have done it. The Lord has forgiven me, and I came to thank you for speaking to me, and to tell you."

This incident ought to impress us with the truth that, wherever we are placed, there will be open doors, opening into fields of service where, if we are watchful and faithful, we may bear a testimony for Christ that will bear its fruit in the salvation of souls.

One reason why Paul found open doors where other people did not was, that he was always adapting himself to the situation, and trying to put himself in his brother's place, and get hold of the motives that would be most effective in bringing him to give an interested hearing to the gospel.

We need to do that. In trying to win a man to forsake his sins and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, we surely ought to exercise as much common sense and inventive genius as we do in carrying on the business interests by which we get our daily bread. Dr. Edward Eggleston tells the story of a half-witted boy, who found a horse that everybody else failed to find, though there had been constant and diligent search made for the valuable animal. When

asked how he came to find the horse, he said: "I just went and sat down on that 'ar stump, and I thought, If I were a horse, where would I go, and what would I do? and I went right off and found him."

We need an immense amount of that kind of consecrated horse-sense in pushing forward the work of the Church, and bringing the claims of Christ in an attractive way home to the heart of every man and woman and child in the community. To a Christian who thus sets his wits to work to make himself a successful soul-winner, opposition and difficulties only arouse enthusiasm, and add to the joy which he finds in his work.

When I came to my pastorate in South Boston, Massachusetts, several years since, I very well remember the first person who was converted. It was on the second Sunday evening of my pastorate. In an after-meeting, following the sermon, a young groceryman, a wiry little fellow, rose for prayers, and before leaving the house had thoroughly consecrated himself to God, and became a happy Christian. I was very happy over him; but if I had known what a valuable man he was going to be, I would have been happier yet; for the very next Sunday that

young fellow presented himself at a Bible-class, and had two other young grocery clerks with him; and for months scarcely a prayer-meeting or a Sunday-school or a Sunday evening service went by that he did not have somebody new with him, about whom he was anxious and for whose soul he was seeking. He studied plans by which he could win souls day and night. He used to bring them to me and introduce them to me at the church-door, and, after getting them seated, slip out for a minute to tell me all he knew about them, and try to give me a hint by which I might be able to bait my hook so as to land them for the Master. And all the time I preached, his face was aflame with interest, and his heart going up in prayer to God that the word might be blessed to the salvation of his friend. He would make engagements to meet a man at his house, or at a certain corner of the street, to come with him to the prayer-meeting or to the Sunday service.

No lover ever plied the arts of persuasion more seductively or more devotedly than did he to win the souls on whom he had set his faith in order to bring them within the reach of the gospel. The result was that within six months that young grocer's clerk, who had very little educa-

tion and only ordinary ability of any sort, had, by his persistence, his tact, his consecrated common sense, and his abounding love for the Master, brought to the Church more than twenty men who had been converted and become members of the Church. Think how rapidly the world would be brought to Christ if all of us worked like that! And yet he had not lost any time from his work, and his employer thought more of him than ever.

I remember, in that same congregation, a young English girl, who came one Sunday morning at the public service to unite with the Church on probation. She was a domestic in a home where none of the family were Christians. She lived such a sweet Christian life in that home that after a little her mistress came with her one Sunday night to Church, and in the after-meeting came to the altar, and this girl prayed over her until she found the Lord. Only a little while later the daughter of the house was converted, and the entire family brought under the influence of the Church, all through the faithful, loving, Christian life of that servant girl, who sought day by day to bear a fragrant witness for the Lord.

Brothers, sisters, shall we not take this mes-

sage home to our hearts? What the open door for you is, I do not know; but God knows, and if you will open your heart to him, and try in sincerity to know his will, he will make you see it, and will give you grace and courage to enter it in his name and in his strength. Nothing else is of so great importance to us as this. Other things seem very important now: to be a good financier, to be a successful politician, to win social prestige, to stand at the head of the profession,—all these seem attractive; but when life's little day is over, and, swift-winged through the years, we come to stand in Zion and before God, how petty and insignificant it will all seem compared to the great question as to whether we have, with patient love, acquired and practiced the art of winning our brothers and sisters away from the deadly fascinations of their sins to righteousness and eternal life!

VI.

OUT OF THE MIRE INTO THE CHOIR.

"He brought me up . . . out of the miry clay, . . . and he hath put a new song in my mouth."—PSALM XL, 2, 3.

THIS is a graphic picture. David represents himself as in a position of great sorrow and trouble. He was down in the depths of a horrible pit, the bottom of which was formed of miry clay, so that the efforts which he made to get out only drew him the deeper into the mire. In such a condition as that, he prayed unto the Lord, and then waited patiently. He declares that God inclined his ear unto him, and heard him, and, what is more, took hold upon him, and brought him up out of the horrible pit, pulling his feet out of the mire, and placing them upon the solid rock, where his goings could be established, and he would not need to stagger to and fro, as a man does who tries to walk through a miry swamp.

Not only was there this outward transformation, but there was an inward uplift as well. A new song is put into his mouth—a song of praise and gratitude to God. In all this the

psalmist gives a very true picture of sin, and salvation from it, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Sin is a mire, which will entrap and draw down the strongest feet.

One of the most graphic and fearfully fascinating pictures in all literature is Victor Hugo's description of death in the quicksands. He relates how it sometimes happens on certain coasts of Brittany or Scotland, that a traveler or fisherman, walking on the beach at low tide, far from the high land, suddenly notices that for several minutes he has been walking with some difficulty. The strand beneath his feet is like pitch. The soles of his feet stick to it. It is sand no longer—it is glue. The beach is perfectly dry; but at every step he takes, as soon as he lifts his foot, the print which it leaves fills with water. The eye, however, has noticed no change. The immense strand is smooth and tranquil. All the sand has the same appearance. Nothing distinguishes the surface which is solid from that which is no longer so. The joyous little cloud of sand-fleas continue to leap tumultuously over the wayfarer's feet. The man pursues his way, endeavoring to get nearer the upland. He is not anxious. Anxious about what? Only he feels somehow that the weight of his feet in-

creases with every step he takes. Suddenly he sinks in. He sinks in two or three inches. Decidedly he is not on the right road. He stops to take his bearings. All at once he looks at his feet. His feet have disappeared. The sand covers them. He draws his feet out of the sand. He will retrace his steps. He turns back. He sinks in deeper. The sand comes up to his ankles. He pulls himself out, and he throws himself to the left. The sand is half-leg deep. He throws himself to the right. The sand comes up to his shins. Then he recognizes, with unspeakable terror, that he is caught in the quicksands, and that he has beneath him the fearful medium in which a man can no more walk than a fish can swim. He throws off his load, if he has one, and lightens himself like a ship in distress. It is already too late. The sand is above his knees. He calls—he waves his hat or handkerchief. The sand gains on him more and more. If the beach is deserted, if the land is too far off, if there is no help in sight, it is all over. He is condemned to that appalling burial—long, infallible, implacable, impossible to slacken or to hasten, which endures for hours, which will not end, which seizes you erect, free, in full health, which draws you by the feet, which at every effort you at-

tempt, at every shout you utter, drags you a little deeper, sinking you slowly into the earth, while you look upon the horizon, the trees, the green fields, the smoke of the villages on the plains, the sails of the ships upon the sea, the birds flying and singing, the sunshine and the sky. The victim attempts to lie down, to creep. Every movement he makes interests him. He howls, implores, cries to the clouds, despairs. Behold him waist-deep in the sand! The sand reaches his breast. He is now only a bust. He raises his arms, utters furious groans, clutches the beach with his nails, would hold by that straw, leans upon his elbows to pull himself out of this soft sheath, and sobs frenziedly. The sand rises. The sand reaches his shoulders. The sand reaches his neck. The face alone is visible now. The mouth cries, the sand fills it—silence! The eyes still gaze, the sand shuts them—night! Now the forehead decreases. A little hair flutters above the sand. A hand comes to the surface of the beach, moves and shakes, and disappears. It is the earth drowning a man.

Terrible as that picture is, you and I know of things more terrible than that. The picture we are studying of a man's feet caught in the mire of sin, presents a far more serious spectacle.

Who of us has not seen a young man's feet caught in that fearful mire? Sometimes it has been the mire of the liquor-saloon, and we have watched as, little by little, the fascination of strong drink has drawn down the man in his strength—little by little, insidiously, unexpectedly, like the fisherman whose feet are caught in the quicksands on the coasts. But after awhile he acknowledges that he can not control or master himself—that when he would live sober, he becomes a drunkard. He makes breathless efforts to reform, signs pledges, tries to pull himself out of the fearful meshes; but only sinks down the deeper. Ah! it is an old story, illustrated in almost every Brooklyn street.

Or, it may be the mire of lust—the soft seductions of flattery and sensuality that have overthrown thousands of the strongest Samsons that have ever lived. Or, it may be into the mire of business entanglement, the love of money blinding the keen conception of rectitude, dulling the inner sense of equity and justice, little by little lowering the purpose and ambition of the life, until greed, loathsome and slimy and devilish, pulls the man beneath its sluggish ooze. Or, it may be it is none of these, but the fascinating strand of pleasant, fashionable self-in-

dulgence. Simple selfishness—perhaps into no mire have so many souls been dragged as that; simply to have one's own way, to do as one pleases; only to forget one's obligation to God and humanity; not a sin of commission, but of omission. How many are caught in those dangerous meshes!

Brother, sister, where are your feet treading? Are you on the solid upland, with a basis of everlasting rock under your feet, or do you tread on the quicksands, in the dangerous mire? I entreat you to be honest with your own soul. If such is your condition to-night, thank God it need not be your doom to perish alone, with none to help or save; for the Lord Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. His strong arm stretches out to you now, and if you will give him your hand and welcome his assistance, he will bring you up out of this horrible pit of despair, out of the miry clay into which you are sinking, and place your feet upon a rock, and establish your goings, and give you a place in the great choir of ransomed and redeemed souls. No matter if you have been drawn down so deep in the mire that you are no longer able to help yourself, and are discouraged about yourself, and even your friends have lost faith in

your ever being saved from your sin,—still Jesus Christ is able to save you. As Dr. Maclaren grandly says: "Jesus Christ walks through the hospital of this world, and sees nowhere incurables. His hope is boundless because, first of all, he sees the dormant possibilities that slumber in the most degraded; and because, still more, he knows that he bears in himself a power that will cleanse the foulest and raise the most fallen.

"There are some metals that resist all attempts to volatilize them by the highest temperature producible in our furnaces; but carry them into the sun, and they will all pass into vapor. There is no man or woman who ever lived, or will live, so absolutely besotted, and held by the chains of his or her sins, that Jesus can not set them free. His hope for outcasts is boundless, because he knows that every sin can be cleansed by his precious blood."

A brother minister relates that, as he was passing out of the meeting one evening, a lady sought him, and asked him to go with her to see her husband, who was quite sick. On the way she told the minister she was very anxious about her husband's spiritual condition. When they entered the sick-room they found him sitting in

an easy-chair, and, after a few words about his sickness, the minister inquired concerning his confidence in God and hope of immortality.

"Well," he said, "I think my chances for getting to heaven are pretty good."

The minister felt that he was not real, and so replied: "Do you believe heaven is a reality?"

He said: "Yes."

"Is it true there is a hell?"

He replied: "Yes, I believe it."

"And you have an immortal soul that will soon be in one or the other of these places forever?"

"Yes," he said, earnestly.

"You just now said you thought your chances for heaven pretty good; you believe heaven is a reality, and hell is a reality, and your precious, immortal soul will soon be happy in heaven forever. You must have some reason for it. Will you please tell me what it is?"

"Well, I've been kind to my wife and children, and I have not intentionally wronged my fellow-men."

"That's all very good," the minister replied, "and it is nice to be able to say that; but, now tell me, what kind of a place do you think heaven is, and what do they do there?"

"Well," he said, "I think there is no sin or sorrow there. It must be a happy place; and I think they sing there a good deal."

Turning to the Book of Revelation, the minister said: "Yes, they do sing there, and I'll just read you a song they sing: 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' You see they are praising their Savior—the one who loved them and died for them. Let me read it again: 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' I want you to take notice, they have not a word to say about what they have done. It is all about what Christ has done. He loved them and died for them. Now, suppose you were up there, and had got there in the way you say—because you had been good to your family, and so on—there would be one sinner in heaven that had never been washed from his sins in the blood of Jesus. You could not join in the song they sing, could you?"

The minister waited for an answer. The sick man's head had dropped, and his eyes were turned to the floor. At last he raised his head, and with an anxious face, like one who was waking out of a life-dream, and was for the first time with honest seriousness facing eternal reali-

ties, he slowly replied: "Well, I never thought of that before."

"Well," said the minister, "God has thought of it before, and he has had written a few verses for persons just like you, who are willing to take their chances, as you said, on their good works, and are deceiving themselves by the false hope of getting to heaven in that way. I'll read the verse. It is in the fourth verse of the fourth chapter of Romans: 'Now unto him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.' Let me explain this. When you were well and could work, you received your wages because you had earned them. You were under no special obligations to the man who paid you. You would come home to your wife, and say, 'Here is what I made to-day.' You could talk about what you had done and what you had got, and you would not have a word to say about the man who paid you. That is just what God means by that verse: 'Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.' If you could get to heaven by what you have done, there would be no grace about it. You would know nothing of God's love as shown in Jesus. You could not sing, 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his

own blood;' for you would be there without a Savior, and you would have no song. Do you think you could be happy?"

By this time the man was ready to confess that, in spite of all the good he had claimed, he was a poor sinner against God, who needed a Divine Savior; and with joy the minister repeated to him those hopeful words that have been the sheet-anchor to so many souls: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" and those other words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Then my friend went away, and on coming back the next morning, beheld a marvelous transformation. As he opened the door, the sick man greeted him with a look of heavenly joy in his face, and said: "O, I'll have a song now. It will be, 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.'"

Brother, have you learned the new song? Do you belong to the redeemed choir? If not, I pray that God's love may get hold of you to-night!

The sweet note of a bullfinch, in its cage by a window looking on a conservatory and garden

caused Canon Wilberforce to say, in his impetuous manner: "That bird knows a sweet little German song, 'Ich liebe dich'—'I love you;' but I can only get him to sing it by standing before his cage, whistling the tune myself, turning my head from side to side, smiling upon him—in every way making myself as much at home with him as possible. Doing this, I often think it is just the way God gets a song out of my heart. He could crush me in his hand, just as I could crush the little bird; but what good would that do? It would be spoiling a beautiful organism, and not getting the song after all. The bird is like me: neither of us can sing to God, 'I love thee,' except we see that which is so true in nature and in grace—'He first loved us.'"

O, my friend, do not let your soul go orphaned in the midst of God's offered tenderness and love. A family once went up from New York to the mountains. Some milk, fresh from a country dairy, was set before the children. One of the little fellows would not drink it.

"Why won't you take it, my child?" inquired the mother.

"What is it?" the little fellow asked.

"Milk," was the response.

"Humph! That ain't milk," said the little boy; "milk's blue."

How many poor, bewildered souls there are who starve themselves on the world's blue milk, and walk a pathway of darkness and disappointment and gloom, while God is continually proffering his love, and ready to awaken melodies of immortal victories in their hearts!

We Christians ought not to fail to get a note of inspiration and courage out of our theme to-night; for the declaration of the psalmist is, that his new song is not to go unheard, but "many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." There is something marvelously inspiring about song. A recent writer in the *Lutheran Quarterly* relates a very interesting story of the overthrow of Louis Napoleon.

He says that during all the long Sunday afternoon and evening before the battle of Sedan the German regiments gathered around their bands of music, and sang the hymns of the Church and the Fatherland. On that afternoon Napoleon made a last reconnoissance with some members of his staff, and once, pointing to a group of Bavarians, he asked: "What are they singing?"

"A household song, sire," replied an aide.

He then rode on to another point, and from a distant camp-fire another chorus came rolling towards him.

"What are they singing?" asked the nervous emperor.

"A battle-hymn, your honor."

The doomed man rode on, and stopped again in the gloom to look down upon a field of Saxons.

"They, too, are singing," he said; "what is it?"

"'A mighty fortress is our God,' the Reformers' battle-hymn," replied a member of his staff.

"My God, we are beaten!" said the stricken man, as he rode back to Sedan, awaiting the horrors of the dawn.

Napoleon felt, with his clear intuition, that he did not have an army to withstand those great groups of singers that went to battle with songs on their lips. And there is nothing that can withstand the army of our God when it goes into battle singing its new song of confidence and praise toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

VII.

THE HERO AND THE SUICIDE.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith."—PHIL. I, 21-25.

WE have here a fascinating and splendid insight into the workings of a great soul; one who, by common consent, is a noble representative of the heroic spirit in human life. No sane man of any faith, or any lack of faith, would deny that Paul was a hero. And he draws aside the curtain in these calm but earnest sentences, and we look through the window and see the play of faith, hope, ambition, longing, fidelity to duty, love for Christ, enthusiasm for humanity, working together in the production of the heroic spirit in this man's life.

Life to Paul was not a fragmentary thing. It was one continuous onward sweep. Its currents ended not in the grave, but only met there

the welcoming tides of the great ocean of immortal life. As the tides of the sea lay hold upon the river with irresistible force, and sweep its fresh floods onward toward the bosom of the great deep, so the power of an endless life laid hold of Paul, and the heavenly magnetism was continually attracting him, tugging at his heart, and drawing him onward toward the greater life beyond. To Paul's sublime faith every part of the universe was filled with the presence of God. His quick ear was never out of hearing of the night-watchman about whom Tennyson sings:

“Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, though as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompassed by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the world of space
In the deep night, that all is well.

And all is well, though faith and form
Be sundered in the night of fear:
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm.”

We are just now come on a time when two contradictory spirits stand out in very prominent incarnation before the public eye. The last year or so has been, I think, remarkable in events which have called for heroism in the common walks of life, and fully as remarkable in the splendid response which has been made to that call. In flood and fire, men and women and children alike have shown themselves rich in the spirit of the noblest heroism. The recent great devastating forest-fires in the West have been full of such illustrations.

One writing from the immediate vicinity declares that the list of heroes of those great disasters can never be enrolled save in that list where every man's deeds are recorded. The whole country has been full of the praise of the railroad engineer who, recalling the only green spot for miles, saved two hundred lives by carrying them to it through the most terrible ordeal, standing at his post when the heat was roasting the flesh from his body. But there was many another hero just as faithful. There was one little boy in West Duluth, only fourteen years old, who carried and dragged two smaller children for several miles from the wreck of the train, where rescuers found them.

There was a young lover who carried his sick betrothed on his back for a mile through the flames to a place of safety, while the heat was so terrible that many others, walking beside him with no burden, lay down and died. There was another man who, after fighting the fire until ready to perish, seeing the danger of his crippled brother, out of love for him rather than hope for himself, picked him up and bore him away to a place of safety. Many who failed were just as heroic in their death as these, and countless others were in their lives. Scores of dead men were found whose positions in death as it instantaneously seized them, showed that they were hastening at all speed into the very face of the flames to the rescue of others. And nearly every one who escaped from the doomed Minnesota villages can tell of some brave soul who reckoned nothing of his own life if he might but help another, and, forgetting self in the moment of keenest agony, thought only of his more helpless brother. Well does one say, "The gallant feats of battle, done under stress of passion, pale before these deeds, done in the face of panic and in despite of mortal agony."

But these heroes are not the only heroes. I thank God that I believe there is more heroism

in the world to-day than ever before. Throughout this business depression, the hard times that have ground so heavily in many a home have developed heroes and heroines whom none know about but God. There are cynics who would try to make us believe that the miserable scandals which we find in our newspapers, telling their sad story of dishonor and frailty, represent the general current of human life; but it is false. As a distinguished New York editor said recently: These are very few in comparison to the wives who bear the brunt of ill-fortune without a murmur; husbands who struggle with poverty, or what is much harder to bear, impending, threatening poverty, with a calm fortitude which excites the pity of the cloud of witnesses in the upper air; both men and women who have secret sufferings so great that their hearts are beating a dead march to the grave, but from whose lips no word of complaint escapes; thousands of girls fighting life's lonely struggle, but who nevertheless keep themselves unspotted in spite of fate, preferring the loneliness of a dingy room, with honesty for company, to the gaudy surroundings which are bought with impurity of life. When one thinks of these things, and counts over these every-day heroes, he feels like thanking God for

belonging to a race that has the capacity for so much goodness in it.

Then, over against this, we have an antagonistic spirit, strongly illustrated in the alarming epidemic of suicide. There can be no doubt, I think, that the number of suicides was never so large in proportion to the population as in this present year. This increasing army of demoralized, defeated self-murderers is shouted on, and evidently largely swelled in number, by that notorious apostle of suicide, Robert G. Ingersoll. The fact that many of the recent suicides have left either letters or other evidence, showing that they have been influenced by Mr. Ingersoll's words to take their own lives, must form serious matter for consideration to even so reckless and possibly so seared a conscience as that of Mr. Ingersoll.

Some years ago, Colonel Gourraud, of London, invited Lord Tennyson, Mr. Gladstone, and Cardinal Manning to utter in his phonograph some brief message to the world, which was never to be repeated until after their death. Some two years after Cardinal Manning's death a number of distinguished men and women gathered by invitation to hear that solemn voice which spoke as from the grave. It is said the strongest-hearted

persons present paled a little as they listened to the message. This is what it was: "I hope that no word of mine, written or spoken in my life, will be found to have done harm to my fellow-men when I am dead." I should like respectfully to commend the sobering thought of the great cardinal to Mr. Ingersoll's consideration. What a contrast between the influence of the words of Ingersoll and those of the white-souled poet, Longfellow!

Charles Sumner tells us that a classmate of his was saved from suicide by reading Longfellow's noble poem, "The Psalm of Life." And General Meredith Reed relates an incident that occurred during the Franco-German war. It was in the midst of the siege of Paris, when a venerable man presented himself to General Reed bowed with grief. He was a very distinguished officer. He said: "I have just learned that my son has been arrested by the German authorities at Versailles on an entirely unfounded charge. He is to be sent to a German fortress and may be condemned to death. I am here alone and helpless. I feel that my mind will give way if I can not find occupation. Can you tell me of some English book that I can translate into French?" General Reed promised to

do so, and he left him. Within an hour or so, however, he received a line from him, saying he had found what he required. A few days afterward he came to see the general, but now erect, his face bright with hope, his voice clear and strong. In explanation of the change he said: "I have been translating Longfellow's 'Psalm of Life,' and I am a new man. I feel that my mind is saved, and that faith and hope have taken the place of despair. I owe it all to Longfellow."

What a contrast between an influence like that, giving hope and courage to disheartened souls, nerving them up to bear life's ills with brave heart, rousing and recruiting their self-respect by a grand conception of the largeness and nobility of life and its possibilities,—what a contrast, I say, between such an influence and that of Mr. Ingersoll, whose words are taking the last ray of hope out of many discouraged minds, and making lives already trying, unbearable, by the added weight of his dark shadow!

And yet, in fairness, we must admit that Mr. Ingersoll is perfectly consistent in his position in favor of suicide. If man is no higher than the beasts that perish; if his life is only the result of a chemical combination; if there is no soul, no spirit, no immortal life beyond, no per-

sonal God to whom we are responsible,—then the natural logic of the situation is suicide, whenever life ceases to give more profit than loss as a temporary investment. The doctrines which Mr. Ingersoll has been preaching so boldly for many years lead naturally to this result, and it is only consistent that, before he closes his record on earth, he should follow that logic to its consummation, and become the apostle of suicide, as he has been heretofore the apostle of infidelity. It is well that the public should see the whole length of the stream, and behold the dark and dismal swamp into which oozes its murky tide.

One turns in abhorrence from such a conception of life and its end, to welcome as a vision from a mountain-top, or a breath from the sea, the life and character and influence of such a man as Paul, who, though he had suffered many things, undergone almost incredible exertion, endured the bitterest persecution, and came to old age scarred on every side, yet could talk about life and death and eternity with calm serenity, saying in substance: "If I continue to live on earth, my life is in fellowship with Jesus Christ, doing his work of loving service; and if I die, it is gain, in that I shall have a wider field and a still more glorious fellowship." What

above everything else was the basis of Paul's heroism? Was it not in this, that the great purpose and ambition of his soul was to be of service?

His character was the result of that service. All his life-time he was building character, and yet character was the natural result of the daily work and toil of his life. Character through service is the golden chain that runs through all his life. "For to me to live is Christ," he said. Christ is the incarnation of that idea of service. "He was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister unto the poorest. He pleased not himself, but sought always the best for others. The secret of this splendid heroism of Paul's, that which made life worth living to him, was the glad service to which he gave his willing heart.

There is no greater lesson for us to learn than this, that the happiness which Mr. Ingersoll and his disciples would call the profit, which alone makes life worth living, does not come to the people who seek it, but rather to those who seek to do their duty and honestly serve God and their fellows.

This is a truth which has been recognized in all the greatest conceptions of literature. Goethe

sets forth this thought very clearly in his two great literary masterpieces. Wilhelm Meister starts out in life, believing that in the gratification of his sensual appetites he will find real happiness; but the sad result was that he found only wretchedness and remorse. Then he changes his ideal, and says, Self-culture will bring me true happiness; but all his learning fails to bring him peace. At last he grows interested in his fellow-men, studies medicine, and in the self-devotion of his medical practice finds a contentment which he had never known before. In giving himself up to service in utter forgetfulness of happiness, happiness becomes his.

The same truth is taught still more clearly in Faust, where Mephistopheles contracts with Faust to give him all possible delights, if he will surrender to him his soul when perfect happiness has been found. Faust passes through precisely the same experience as Wilhelm Meister, and never finds happiness until he drains a sterile, miasmatic tract of land, and makes it fit for habitation. The experiment completed, old and blind, he ascends the tower of his house, and thence looks out, in spirit, upon the work that will bring blessing to millions. "Stay, thou art fair!" he cries, and falls back dead; not into

the hands of Mephistopheles, however, but into those of the heavenly hosts. In both the novel and the play, the great writer is true to the spirit of the gospel of Christ, which makes the heart of all noble life to be service.

The apostles of suicide base their arguments in favor of self-murder on the mistaken ground that sorrow and poverty and pain mean final and lasting defeat and failure. This is the natural conclusion, of course, for them to reach from their narrow vision; but from the higher mountain-top from which Paul looked at human life, he saw that sorrow, as well as joy, was a part of the Divine plan.

In one of the battles of the Crimea a cannon-ball struck inside a fort, and tore a great hole in the center of a garden, destroying for a moment the beauty of the place; but from the rugged hole in the earth there burst out a living stream of water, which flowed on forever afterwards, a cool, refreshing fountain. So to the Christian vision God's benevolence is as often revealed in sorrow as in joy.

Charles Dickens gives us a remarkable illustration of this in his Christmas story, entitled "The Haunted Man." The hero of the story, Redlaw, was in a great agony of grief, when

there appeared before him a specter, who offered to give him power to forget all the sorrow and trouble he had ever known, and in addition to take from him all the feelings and associations that had been developed and fed by sorrow, and not only so, but he should have the power to bestow this gift upon others wherever he went. With great joy he accepted the gift, and went out, as he thought, to cure all the world's heartaches.

But to his great astonishment he became, instead of a blessing, a dire curse wherever he went, and at last by bitter experience he was taught the lesson that, twined about the sorrows and troubles of men and women, were a whole host of kindly recollections, of grateful memories of those who had helped them in difficulty, and of culturing influences that make men strong and good. He learned, indeed, that people were brought together in fellowship and brotherhood far more by what they had suffered in common than by what they had enjoyed; and that if all memory of wrong was taken away, with it went all the blessing which comes from forgiving our enemies; and when the memory of trouble was taken, all thought of sympathy and mercy toward the sorrowing was taken also. As he saw that both himself and his fellows, in the absence of

sorrow and trouble, were becoming monsters of greed and selfishness, and that all the graces of kindness and sympathy were dying out in the world, he prayed that the fateful gift might be taken from him and the memory of his sorrows returned; and as a result he became far happier and wiser. This is in harmony with the spirit of the gospel of Christ; and one with a vision as wide as Paul's, which may be the glad privilege of every one of us, can understand that in God's wisdom and love the threads of joy and sorrow, of victory and defeat, are woven together in one harmonious whole, making at last a robe of character that we may wear in triumph in the heavenly fellowship.

The *Mid-Continent* gives a remarkable narrative of a young newspaper man from Denver who had been seeking in vain for employment, and had gone upon a bridge in Chicago, intending to drown himself.

His hurried step and maddened face attracted the attention of a policeman, who accosted him, and asked him what he was doing there at that time of night. He told the policeman that there was no room for him in Chicago, but there was in the Chicago River.

"Now look a' here, young feller," said the

burly, big-hearted policeman, "you 're a talkin' tro' yer hat, see? You ain't going to jump into no river. You come along wid me, and I'll start you over to de Pacific Mission. Dey's got grub and fire for such fellers what's down in dere luck like you's are, see? And dey sing hymns and read de good book, and dey'll give you a warm place to sleep. Now come along."

The young journalist went along, and as he "ran" he "read," so to speak. To make the story brief, he received the hearty Christian welcome promised. He was first warmed and fed, and then given an opportunity to hear good singing, short prayers, and the common-sense Christian talks he needed. It resulted in his conversion. In the testimony meeting before eight hundred men on Thanksgiving night (all of whom were first well fed, and six hundred of whom were afterward lodged), he asked them, in his remarks, the question which he said had come home so strongly to him the night he tried to drown himself: "Does Ingersoll establish such missions as this? Do his followers? What makes these people care whether I drown myself or not? Is n't there something in this Christianity I always doubted?" That young man is now working might and main for the Master.

His new fellowship with Christian men and women had broadened his horizon and enlarged his vision.

With such a vision we may sing with Mrs. Farningham:

“Life has its valleys
And difficult mountains,
Sands of the deserts
And gurgling, glad fountains;
Sweet grassy meadowlands,
Hard, stony byways;
Ever its ups and downs,
Lowlands and highways.
Sorrows and pleasures
Await every rover
All the world over.

Ills have their recompense,
Labor its guerdon;
Strength to the carrier
Comes with the burden.
After rain, sunshine,
So runs life's story;
Sorrow and strain
Are the preludes to glory.
Clear eyes some gain
In a loss can discover,
All the world over.

That which is loveliest
Comes to the loving;
All that is strongest
The strong have for proving.

Gifts come the surest
To those who love giving;
They have life's best
Who have made it worth living.
Love gives its gold of love,
Aye, to the lover,
All the world over.

Sad heart, be hopeful,
Despairing no longer;
Wrong is the weaker,
The right is the stronger.
Trust and go forward,
On God's help relying;
That which is best lives
Though all else be dying.
God rules forever,
As good will discover,
All the world over."

VIII.

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP.*

“Through it he being dead, yet speaketh.”—HEBREWS XI, 4.

THIS Scripture is a testimony to the immortality of a great faith. It is connected with an illustration of the indestructible power of a worthy belief when incarnated in human life. John Stuart Mill's greatest maxim was, that “One man with a belief is equal to a hundred men with only interests.” A genuine human life flows on beyond its coast. As far out at sea, off the mouth of a great river, out of sight of land, the sailor lifts from the vessel's side his bucket of sweet, fresh water from the midst of the salt ocean, so the life we study to-day will flow far beyond its coast, and will sweeten life far out of sight over the billows of the years.

It is not my purpose this morning to act the part of a biographer in telling you, in detail, the

*A memorial sermon delivered in memory of the Hon. Samuel Booth, ex-mayor of Brooklyn, and for thirty-six years superintendent of the Hanson Place Methodist Episcopal Sunday-school.

story of the life of Samuel Booth, but only to touch here and there upon some of those lofty principles and characteristics which made his life the inspiration and the benediction it was; for the longest life has, after all, but few great sources of inspiration. You remember that Jacob, more than a hundred and thirty years old, when he came to die, looking back over what seems to us that long period of a life that had had more than its share of diverse experiences, saw only three things, and condensed his biography into a half-dozen lines. The first that he saw as he looked back was the one farthest away, and for a moment his thought rested on the night at Bethel: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me." And again he lingers for a moment: "And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan." All the rest had been forgotten—his ambition, the long, sharp struggles by which he had sought riches and honor, even his sorrow over the loss of Joseph, and the terrible fear he once experienced of his brother, Esau—all was lost in the dim haze and dust of the distance, and he saw only three great pivotal times in his past looming up like three mountain peaks: the time when he met God at Bethel,

and the heavenly stairway brought angels down to comfort him; the time when he found Rachel, and his heart was stirred to its profoundest depths by human love; and the time when he lost her, and entered into the black night of grief. And so in this strong and splendid life that has been lived out in this city of Brooklyn, and which, in so large a part, has had this church as its theater of operation, there are certain strong features which we want to study.

Samuel Booth had a natural and acquired gift of leadership among men. Many who recognize that, might be at a loss to analyze the reason for that leadership. It seems to me that, in a very large degree, it was the leadership of simple, honest goodness. Phillips Brooks, in a sermon preached on All-saints' Day many years ago, declares that there are three kinds of leadership among strong men.

First, there is the hero. It may be in the mere strength of personality—mere strong individuality—showing itself in some acts of prowess, some brave, self-risking deed, some conquering of circumstances by a dash of romantic daring which attracts men, and influences them. In such cases the leader is what we call a hero,—some man like Napoleon crossing the Alps in

winter, or Wolfe scaling the heights at Quebec, or Sheridan riding from Winchester to turn defeat into victory. Then there is another class of men who are leaders because of the truths that they teach. Such a leader leads men by the power of ideas—by superior knowledge. He is a teacher,—such a man as Plato, or Bacon, or Sir Isaac Newton, or Darwin, or Benjamin Franklin. And then there is still another kind, and perhaps it is the highest kind, of leadership. It is in a certain thing which we call goodness. It is something which we can not define, otherwise than that there is a larger and more manifest presence of God in the life of one man than other men have. Their conscience and will and motive force seem to be so in touch with the Divine heart that other men feel that this man, more than themselves, embodies the Divine spirit, and shows forth the spirit of Christ.

Now I think that Samuel Booth, though he had undoubtedly something of the hero in him, and some element of the teacher in any great truth that impressed his own soul, yet above everything else his power came from his goodness. And so, in a very true sense, he was a saint. I like to impress this idea of sainthood with reference to a great, splendid, strong, vigor-

ous man like Samuel Booth. As Bishop Brooks says, again: "Saints, as we often think of them, are feeble, nerveless creatures, silly and effeminate—the mere soft padding of the universe. I would present true sainthood to you as the strong chain of God's presence in humanity, running down through all history, and making of it a unity, giving it a large and massive strength, able to bear great things, and do great things, too."

Samuel Booth had the bravery of goodness. He had the courage to say Yes, or the courage to say No. Through a long life, lived largely and intensely; having many business interests of his own as well as those relating to the public; having much to do with politics,—he had the courage to live an honest, clean, Christian life, keeping his record clear and bright in the midst of every temptation to be careless of Christian obligation. It requires more bravery to do that than it does to storm a fortress under the inspiration of music and the din of musketry.

So good a judge of courage as Colonel T. Wentworth Higginson declares that if he were asked to record the bravest thing done, within his immediate knowledge, during the Civil War, he would award the palm to something done by

a young assistant surgeon, not quite twenty-one years old at the time—Dr. Thomas T. Miner, then of Hartford, Connecticut. It was at an exceedingly convivial supper-party of officers at Beaufort, South Carolina, to which a few of the younger subalterns had been invited. Colonel Higginson says that he saw them go with some regret, since whisky was rarely used in his regiment, and he had reasons to think it would circulate pretty freely at this entertainment. About Dr. Miner he had no solicitude, for he never drank it. Later he heard from some of the other officers present what had occurred.

They sat late, and the fun grew fast and furious. Some of the guests tried to get away, but could not, and those who attempted it were required to furnish in each case a song, a story, or a toast. Miner was called upon for his share, and there was a little hush as he rose up. He had a singularly pure and boyish face, and his manliness of character was known to all. He said: "Gentlemen, I can not give you a song or a story, but I will offer a toast, which I will drink in water, and you shall drink as you please. That toast is, 'Our Mothers.'"

Of course, an atom of priggishness or self-consciousness would have spoiled the whole sug-

gestion. No such quality was visible. The shot told. The party quieted down from that moment, and soon broke up. The next morning no less than three officers, all men older and of higher rank than Dr. Miner, rode several miles to thank him for the simplicity and courage in his rebuke; and Colonel Higginson says: "Any one who has much to do with young men will admit, I think, that it cost more courage to do what he did than to ride up to the cannon's mouth."

That was the kind of courage which Samuel Booth had, so far as I am able to find out, all his life long.

Again, he was a man of genuine public spirit. He was interested in what interested his city and his State. He believed it was his duty and the duty of all Christian men to be as faithful to civic obligations as they were to the claims of the Church. He took the office of mayor of the city of Brooklyn with the same sort of conscientious purpose and with the same determination of sacred fidelity that he felt when he took the office of superintendent of the Hanson Place Sunday-school. Duty, to him, was a sacred thing—as sacred one place as another. Everywhere he was God's servant, he was Christ's representa-

tive—as honest and straightforward and clean in the Board of Aldermen, at the head of the post-office, or as treasurer for bounty funds in time of war, as he was in relation to the Church which he loved, and the communion altar which he so reverently approached. If we might have a generation of citizens like that, how many things would die out of existence! If all the professed disciples of Jesus Christ in this country were to be so aroused to their civil duties that they would determinedly and with prayerful fidelity seize hold upon the political life of the country, how the gambling-hell would be uprooted, and the great race-tracks and watering-places purified; and the saloon, that veritable hell of modern civilization, where everything that is mean and dishonest and corrupt and vile and lecherous breeds its devil's brood, to prey upon the very vitals of city and State and National Government,—how soon this sink of iniquity would be dried up, were Christian citizens to do but their simple Christian duty as citizens in the cities where they live!

Samuel Booth believed in boys. Indeed, it might be said he had a passion for boys, and that for this reason I have called him the boys' patron saint. The boy who is midway between his kilts

and long trousers has a perilous gauntlet to run. There is no time of his life so important, and yet there is no period when he is so often misunderstood, nor when he finds so few people who are patient enough and sympathetic enough to enter into fellowship with him in those budding hopes and ambitions which are so dear to the boy's heart. Brother Booth could go all the way through with Mrs. Farningham in her poem about "My Neighbor's Boy:"

"He seems to be several boys in one,
So much is he constantly everywhere;
And the mischievous things that boy has done,
No mind can remember, nor mouth declare.
He fills the whole of his share of space
With his strong, straight form and his merry face.

He is very cowardly, very brave;
He is kind and cruel; is good and bad;
A brute and a hero,—who will save
The best from the worst of my neighbor's lad?
The mean and the noble strive to-day—
Which of the powers will have its way?

The world is needing his strength and skill;
He will make hearts happy or make them ache.
What power is in him for good or ill!
Which of life's paths will his swift feet take?
Will he rise, and draw others up with him?
Or the light that is in him burn low and dim?

But what is my neighbor's boy to me
More than a nuisance? My neighbor's boy,

Though I have some fears for what he may be,
Is a source of solicitude, hope, and joy,
And a constant pleasure,—because I pray
That the best that is in him will rule, some day.

He passes me by with a smile and a nod ;
He knows I have hope of him—guesses, too,
That I whisper his name when I ask of God
That men may be righteous, his will to do.
And I think that many would have more joy
If they loved and prayed for a neighbor's boy."

It would be a blessed thing for the world if Christian men and women everywhere were to enter into more perfect fellowship with Samuel Booth and Mrs. Farningham in love and prayer for a neighbor's boy. These boys are the promise of the future. When William the Conqueror sailed from the shores of France, eight centuries ago, to capture the crown of England from the head of Harold the False, the royal galley led the fleet. The figure-head upon its prow was a golden boy, pointing the way across the channel to England and victory. So, please God, let us raise golden boys in our homes and Churches and schools, who shall point to a still mightier civilization to come.

Among the Revolutionary curiosities which they cherish in the old State-house in Philadelphia is the shell of a little drum from which

the heads are gone, and above it are these words: "This drum was beaten at the battle of Germantown—1777—by John Shumaker, aged twelve years." As the drum is now headless, it is probable that little Johnnie got so excited in the battle that he beat the heads out with the drumsticks. But let us not forget that, while great men who are able to fire their mighty cannon here and there in the cause of righteousness are important for the moment, the great hope of the race is in the multitudes of boys who are beating their drums in anticipation of their part in the struggle for a wider liberty and a holier civilization.

Samuel Booth believed in men. He wisely wanted to get hold of them when they were boys, and keep them off the breakers which wreck so many young men, spoiling life's cargo at the outset, and making hard indeed the struggle for them to again get under way for a prosperous career; yet he believed that so long as a man lived there was hope that the grace of God might lift him out of his sins and help him into a new life. No one but God knows how much good he did because of this belief. During the many years of his close relation with the Elmira Reformatory, he came into personal

contact with hundreds—and indeed, in the total, with thousands—of young men, who had been sent there from the city of Brooklyn; and there are hundreds of them who were rescued from a life of crime, and were started again upon a path of rectitude and righteousness, and are living to-day honest and successful lives, because Samuel Booth put his great stalwart form square in the path between them and hell, and by his kindly sympathy and brotherly fellowship turned them about, bolstered them up while they needed it, encouraged them when they were disheartened, and gave them a new lease on an honest life. He reminds me very much of the Earl of Shaftesbury. His career was not so widely known; but, so far as he had the power to reach, it was as thoroughly noble in every respect. Both in Booth and Shaftesbury the great power was in giving themselves. They did not succeed by any sort of machinery, but by personal contact. A reformed criminal was once asked where his reformation began. "With my talk with our earl," was the reply. "What did the earl say which was so impressive?" "It was not so much what he said as what he did. He put his arm around me, and said, 'Jack, we'll make a man of you yet.'" Ah! that is the great power.

It was so with the Master. It must be so with us all who would bring wounded souls back to the Master.

But, after all, what made it possible for Samuel Booth to do all this was the deep, abiding faith in his soul that every man, however warped and twisted, had in him the possibility of becoming, by God's grace, a good and a holy man.

A very interesting story is told of an experience Mr. W. T. Round, agent of the Prisoners' Reformation Society of New York, once had with a discharged convict from Sing Sing.

One day, while sitting in his down-town office in New York, the door opened, and one of the most evil-visaged men he had ever seen in his life walked towards him. The man was a discharged convict from Sing Sing. He could neither read nor write, but had with him a letter from the warden of the prison to Mr. Round, which he had been led to believe was one of recommendation. The missive read something like this:

"DEAR MR. ROUND,—The bearer of this is one of the worst cases. He is a dangerous fellow, and utterly untrustworthy. Be careful of him."

After reading the letter, Mr. Round asked the man what he wanted. He replied that he

wanted work, and was willing to do anything. As Mr. Round afterwards stated to a friend, the man had a most wicked face, but beneath his hardened countenance seemed to sparkle a sense of honesty. The ex-convict was told that not very much could be done for him, but that a man was wanted in the agent's office, and that he might have the position. He seemed very grateful, and was put to work. The next day Mr. Round's mother visited the office, and when her son returned home that night she told him that he must get rid of the man, as she believed that some day the man would kill him. A week passed on, and Jack (for that was the ex-convict's name) seemed to be a reformed man. The following day a gentleman called to see Mr. Round, and left a contribution of fifty dollars for the Society. When the gentleman left, he laid the money on the desk and began writing, when a feeling began to steal over him that some one was cautiously creeping up towards him from behind. Beads of perspiration began to stand out on his forehead; but yet he hesitated about looking around. A few seconds passed when, involuntarily, he turned in his chair, and stood erect. Before him was the ex-convict, with a bludgeon in hand, ready to brain

him. The men gazed steadily in one another's eyes, when Mr. Round put his hand gently on the arm of the ex-convict, and, in a kindly voice, said: "Jack, if you do this, it will break my heart."

The words acted like magic. The frame of the great brutal man trembled like a leaf. A pallor overspread his face; the fingers relaxed, and the weapon fell to the floor. When he became composed, he admitted what he had intended to do, and also told Mr. Round that that one sincere, brotherly expression had completely reformed him. His after life clearly demonstrated the truth of this assertion, and he is now a prosperous merchant in the city of New York.

Booth, as well as Round, knew the value of timeliness, and so it was his custom for many years to have these young men, when they first came back from the reformatory, come and see him in his home, and with great sympathy he sought to tide them over hard and dangerous places. A little help that comes just at the time one needs it, of what great value it is! Mrs. Sangster has a sad but wonderfully true song about the "Help that Comes Too Late:"

"'T is a wearisome world, this world of ours,
With its tangles small and great,

Its weeds that smother the springing flowers,
And its hapless strifes with fate;
But the darkest day of its desolate days
Sees the help that comes too late.

Ah! woe for the word that is never said
Till the ear is deaf to hear,
And woe for the lack to the fainting head
Of the ringing shout of cheer;
Ah! woe for the laggard feet that tread
In the mournful wake of the bier!

What booteth help when the heart is numb?
What booteth a broken spar
Of love thrown out when the lips are dumb,
And life's barque drifteth afar,
O far and fast from the alien past,
Over the moaning bar?

A pitiful thing the gift to-day
That is dross and nothing worth,
Though if it had come but yesterday
It had brimmed with sweet the earth—
A fading rose in a death-cold hand,
That perished in want and dearth.

Who fain would help in this world of ours,
Where sorrowful steps must fall,
Bring help in time to the waning powers
Ere the bier is spread with a pall;
Nor send reserves when the flags are furled,
And the dead beyond your call.

For battling most in this dreary world,
With its tangles small and great,
Its lonesome nights and its weary days,
And its struggles forlorn with fate,
Is that bitterest grief, too deep for tears,
Of the help that comes too late."

Like Elijah of old, Samuel Booth died with the harness on. His lessened strength for two or three years had made it impossible for him to do all that he had been accustomed to do before; but his heart was in it none the less. There was some resemblance between Elijah and Booth. Elijah had a great interest in young men. He was always around among the farms and fields, picking one out here and there, and educating him for the Lord's service. Not only so, but he had three schools for young men—one at Bethel, one at Gilgal, and another at Jericho. And we are told that on that last day, before the horses and chariots of fire were to carry him away, he seemed to be conscious that his last day was at hand; and he walked thirty miles that day in order that he might visit all the schools and have a last look and a few words with the boys. Booth was not able to get back in his last days even to the Sunday-school; but it was only a few days before his death that, while I sat by his bed, he had brought and given to me a copy of the Annual Year-book of the Elmira Reformatory, and his face glowed with a heavenly light as he tried to tell me of its great success, and as he made

inquiries later about the Sunday-school. And so it was that our Elijah came to his translation. May a double portion of his spirit fall upon the young men of this Church and congregation!

IX.

TIGHTENING THE GIRDLE-CHAINS.

"They used helps, undergirding the ship."—Acts
XXVII, 17.

PAUL was on his way to Rome on an Alexandrian corn-ship. He was a prisoner under guard, going to Cæsar to be tried on his appeal. He had advised against the voyage at this season of the year; but the centurion and the captain, as well as the owner of the ship, who was anxious, no doubt, to get a good passenger fare from Paul and the soldiers who guarded him, sided against the preacher, thinking they knew a great deal more about it than he did; and as a result they came to disaster; for in this case the preacher seems to have had the best of it in information and judgment.

So when "the south wind blew softly," they set sail with all confidence; but they had not gone very far before they ran into a tempest, and in the great storm which followed, the ship was badly strained and began to leak, and, as was common in those times when vessels were less stanchly constructed than they are now,

they got out their great girdle-chains and undergirded the ship, thus stopping the leak as much as possible, and giving strength to the vessel.

It seems to me that there ought to be in this suggestive incident a message for us. Life is even compared to a voyage, and the breaking up of character and the destruction of a promising career is perhaps more frequently and naturally likened to a shipwreck than to any other figure. A man's character, then, is the ship in which he sails on the tempestuous voyage of human life, and it surely will not be without benefit to us to study some of the helps or strong chains by which it is possible to undergird our character in times of temptation, and when we are in danger of being overwhelmed by the storm.

How often we hear repeated, about somebody who has made a failure of life, the suggestive phrase, "He has gone all to pieces!" What are the great chains that keep a character from "going to pieces" on the rocks? Perhaps they will seem trite and commonplace to you; but if you let them gird your personal life, I am sure they will be full of romantic interest.

One of the greatest blunders we can possibly make is to suppose the romantic and ideal to be

fofeign to, or have little to do with, the practical affairs of every-day existence. Instead, the romantic and the ideal ought to clothe with their halo of interest, and enthusiasm the commonest every-day action of life, thus lifting it out of the prosaic, and making it poetic and splendid.

Beatrice Harraden, in that suggestive little book, "Ships that Pass in the Night," has a fascinating picture of a traveler, much worn with journeying, who climbed the last bit of rough road which led to the summit of a high mountain. It had been a long journey and a rough one, but the traveler had vowed that he would reach it before death prevented him. The mountain was the most difficult of ascent of that long chain called "The Ideals;" but he had a strongly hoping heart and a sure foot. He lost all sense of time, but he never lost the feeling of hope.

"Even if I faint by the wayside," he said to himself, "and am not able to reach the summit, still it is something to be on the road which leads to the High Ideals."

At last he reached the temple on the summit, and rang the bell, and of the keeper who opened the gate he asked: "Old white-haired man, tell me, and have I come at last to the wonderful Temple of Knowledge? I have been journeying

hither all my life. Ah! but it is hard work climbing up the Ideals."

The old man touched the traveler on the arm. "Listen!" he said gently; "this is not the Temple of Knowledge, and the Ideals are not a chain of mountains; they are a stretch of plains. Go back to the plains, and tell the dwellers in the plains that the Temple of True Knowledge is in their midst; any one may enter in who chooses. Tell them the Ideals are not a mountain range, but their own plains where their great cities are built, and where the corn grows, and where men and women are toiling, sometimes in sorrow and sometimes in joy. The Temple has always been in the plains, in the very heart of life and work and daily effort. The philosopher may enter; the stonebreaker may enter. You must have passed it every day of your life."

There is a truth here which every one of us ought to learn. The glory of our religion is that it glorifies common life; and the girdles that we need are those that shall hold us strong to meet the waves that beat against us in the home, in the school, in the street, and in the market-place.

The great girdle-chain, without which no life-ship will permanently stand the storm, is prayer. The oft-quoted words of Tennyson have voiced

the faith of the greatest souls who have ever lived:

“More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day;
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

Emerson said, “Hitch your wagon to a star;” but it is possible for us to have nobler steeds than that. The soul that genuinely and sincerely prays to God, holding communion with him, joins strength with the God who made the stars. And the joy of all this is, that this greatest possible girdle of character is just as surely within the reach of the weakest and humblest as it is of the most learned and powerful.

It is related of Alexander the Great, who was a shabby little creature to look at, that one day, when the king was surrounded by abject courtiers, a poor woman came to plead for a life very precious to her. One of the most insignificant of the courtiers was a man of splendid presence, and so the poor woman, thinking he looked more like a king than any one else, cast herself on the

earth before him, and poured out her heart's plea. When she ended, the real king drew near, and said: "I know whom it was you meant to speak to. You shall have what you ask." If a man like Alexander the Great could do that, how much more shall our Heavenly Father understand the weakest cry of the most humble soul that appeals to him?

William Canton, in a volume of mingled prose and poetry recently issued in England, has a little bit of advice to young parents. He says: "Accept for future use this shrewd discovery from my experience: When a baby is restless and fretful, hold its hands! That steadies it. It is not used to the speed with which the earth revolves, and the gigantic paternal hands close round the warm, soft, twitching fists, soft as grass, and strong as the everlasting hills." So amid all life's nervousness and fear, when life is too swift for us, when we are confused and dizzy with the strife of tongues, it is possible, by prayer, to put our hands into the steadying palm of our Father.

"Hold thou my hands;
In grief and joy, in hope and fear,
Lord, let me feel that thou art near.
Hold thou my hands!

If e'er by doubts
Of thy Fatherhood depressed,
I can not find in thee my rest,
Hold thou my hands!

Hold thou my hands—
These passionate hands too quick to smite,
These hands so eager for delight—
Hold thou my hands!

And when at length
With darkened eyes and fingers cold,
I seek some last loved hand to hold,
Hold thou my hands!"

Another common girdle within the reach of all is an appetite for good reading—a taste for good literature. One who has acquired a taste for reading good books has always within reach the possibility of communion with the high souls of all ages. Charles Sumner, in his great oration on "Fame and Glory," recalls an interesting incident in the life of Wolfe, the conqueror of Quebec. Perhaps of all the gallant young men who had to do with the French and English settlement of this country, none has attracted so large a share of interest as Wolfe. While yet young in years he was placed at the head of an adventurous expedition destined to prostrate the French empire in Canada, and every leader of a forlorn hope in any good cause since that day has recalled the picture of the gallant young

general climbing the precipitous steeps which conduct to the heights of the strongest fortress on the American Continent.

An eminent artist has portrayed the scene of his death, which came in the very hour of victory: "History and poetry have dwelt upon this scene with peculiar fondness. Such is the glory of arms! Happily there is preserved to us a tradition of this day which affords the gleam of a truer glory;" for the biographer assures us that as young Wolfe floated down the current of the St. Lawrence in his boat, under cover of night, in the enforced silence of a military expedition, to effect a landing at an opportune point, he was heard, repeating to himself in a subdued voice, that beautiful poem—then but just written, but now known wherever the English language has gone—Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard." On his way to battle and to death, the daring soldier, far from home and the gentle domestic associations of kindred and loved ones, was comforting his soul and girding up his strong nature to do his whole duty by communion with the poet. As he finished the recitation, he said to his companions, in a low but earnest tone, that he "would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec." So the business man

who finds many a stress of trial and danger, demanding a heroism equal to that of the soldier, may gird his daily life by the cultivation of lofty communion and fellowship in the world of books.

Closely akin to this is the girdle of friendship. There can be no greater safeguard (always excepting the communion with God) than Christian friendship in the hour of trial. As another well says: "When a man feels the ground slipping from under him, when his power of resistance begins to weaken, and he realizes that a great gulf of wrong-doing is yawning before him, how helpful is the presence and sympathy of one to whom he is bound by the sacred ties which bind both to Christ! First, Christ himself, then those who are Christ's, are the safest resorts of one who is assailed by the wiles of the evil one."

Make friends! Make friends with good people. Make yourself attractive to good people. Cultivate the art of trying to please the very best and noblest Christian people you know. What a girdle it is in the hour of trial to feel that there are noble, high-toned souls, who look at all questions from a lofty moral height, who are interested in you, who love you, who trust you, and who will be hurt at the heart if you fall below the high standard which they have set for you!

Bishop Vincent relates that during all his son's early childhood, when the little boy was going anywhere away from home, he would say to him: "You must remember now whose boy you are, and be good." But one day, as the lad grew older, he stole a march on the bishop, and as his father was going away, the boy said: "You must be a good man now, and remember whose father you are." How much good the remembrance of these human relations does us! And it can not possibly help being a girdle of strength to any man to remember, when he is tempted to do a wrong thing, that he belongs to a circle of true and noble souls who are trusting him not to degrade their comradeship and their common honor.

Another strong girdle-chain amid the storms of life is a habit of helpfulness for other tried and tempted souls. A very significant thing is said about Job in the last chapter of the wonderful book which bears his name: "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends." It is surely significant that the turning point in Job's life came at the moment of his self-forgetfulness, when his whole being was possessed with a desire to help others. There is nothing more divine or Christlike than that

spirit. As we catch Christ's spirit, we gain his sublime strength of resistance and triumphant power over all evil.

The Chicago *Inter-Ocean* tells the story of a little boy who was found sleeping under a wooden sidewalk, early in the morning of a cold spring day, with a pigeon cuddled in his bosom. Poor little fellow! He had no father, mother, sister, or brother to love, and he could not find food for a dog when it was so hard to get any for himself; but he could feed a pigeon, and thus have something to love and protect. He could not protect himself from the inclemency of the weather, but he could protect and feed something; so he shared his crust, and gave the shelter of his bosom to the little dove.

Ah! how many human doves there are who need our sheltering bosom! Soiled doves, if you will, but dear to the heart of God, and many of them a thousand times more sinned against than sinning, and rich in possibilities for the development of the very highest type of humanity.

A gentleman, writing to the *Interior* the other day, relates this incident in his own career as a prosecuting attorney: "A boy of fifteen was brought in for trial. He had no attorney, no witnesses, and no friends. As the prosecuting

attorney looked him over, he was pleased with his appearance. He had nothing of the hardened criminal about him. In fact, he was impressed that the prisoner was an unusually bright-looking little fellow. He found that the charge against him was burglary. There had been a fire in a dry-goods store, where some of the merchandise had not been entirely consumed. The place had been boarded up to protect, for the time being, the damaged articles. Several boys, among them this defendant, had pulled off a board or two, and were helping themselves to the contents of the place, when the police arrived. The others got away, and this was the only one caught. The attorney asked the boy if he wanted a jury trial. He said "No;" that he was guilty, and preferred to plead guilty.

Upon the plea being entered, the prosecutor asked him where his home was. He replied that he had no home.

"Where are your parents?" was asked. He answered that they were both dead.

"Have you no relatives?" was the next question.

"Only a sister, who works out," was the answer.

"How long have you been in jail?"

"Two months."

"Has any one been to see you during that time?"

"No, sir."

The last answer was very like a sob. The utterly forlorn and friendless condition of the boy, coupled with his frankness and pleasing presence, caused a lump to come into the lawyer's throat, and into the throats of many others, who were listening to the dialogue. Finally the attorney suggested to the judge that it was a pity to send the boy to the reformatory, and that what he needed more than anything else was a home.

By this time the court officials, jurors, and spectators had crowded around, so the better to hear what was being said. At this juncture one of the jurors addressed the court, and said: "Your honor, a year ago I lost my only boy. If he were alive, he would be about this boy's age. Ever since he died I have been wanting a boy. If you will let me have this little fellow, I'll give him a home, put him to work in my printing establishment, and treat him as if he were my own son."

The judge turned to the boy, and said: "This

gentleman is a successful business man. Do you think, if you are given this splendid opportunity, you can make a man of yourself?"

"I'll try," very joyfully answered the boy.

"Very well; sign a recognizance, and go with the gentleman," said the judge.

A few minutes later the boy and his new friend left together, while tears of genuine pleasure stood in many eyes in the crowded courtroom. The lawyer, who signs his name to the story, declares that the boy turned out well, and proved to be worthy of his benefactor's kindness.

Deeds like that are waiting for the doing on every hand, and no man gives himself up to this spirit of helpfulness for others without strengthening his own life.

. Let us recount the girdles: Prayer, fellowship with books, communion with noble friends, a divine spirit of helpfulness for others,—these ought to make us strong and brave citizens in this hour when so many stern problems confront our country. There never was a time when the Republic needed men and women, well girded to do their whole duty as patriotic citizens and as wise Christians, than now. We need to sing to each other James Russell Lowell's lines, writ-

ten for another crisis, but equally applicable to this:

"'Tis as easy to be heroes as to sit, the idle slaves
Of a legendary virtue carved upon our fathers' graves.
Worshippers of light ancestral make the present light a crime.
Was the *Mayflower* launched by cowards? steered by men
behind their time?

Turn those tracks toward past or future that make Plymouth
Rock sublime?

They were men of present valor, stalwart old iconoclasts,
Unconvinced by ax or gibbet that all virtue was the Past's;
But we make their truth our falsehood, thinking that hath
made us free;

Hoarding it in moldy parchments, while our tender spirits
flee

The rude grasp of that great impulse which drove them
across the sea.

They have rights who dare maintain them. We are traitors
to our sires,

Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's new-lit altar fires.
Shall we make their creed our jailer? Shall we, in our
haste to slay,

From the tombs of the old prophets steal the funeral lamps
away,

To light up the martyr-fagots round the prophets of to-day?

New occasions teach new duties; time makes ancient good
uncouth;

They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast
of Truth.

Lo! before us gleam her camp-fires! We ourselves must
pilgrims be,

Launch our *Mayflower*, and steer boldly through the des-
perate winter sea;

Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-
rusted key."

X.

THE NIGHT-WATCH OF THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord."—LUKE XII, 35, 36.

THIS is the picture of a Christian, painted by Christ himself. It stands out before the imagination with great clearness. As we read, there appears before us a strong, martial figure, clothed for action; the loins are girded about; in his hand he carries a lighted torch; and there is, in the poise of the figure and in the earnest cut of the features and flashing of the eye, a look of expectancy and hope. Surely it will be interesting for us to study this conception of Christ's of what our own lives ought to be.

I.

We have, first, in this figure a suggestion of power. Men gird their loins for strength. This is in harmony with the spirit of the New Testament. You will search the words of Christ or Paul in vain for any other conception of a Chris-

tian than this. He is to be a strong, noble figure—one full of courage and endurance; he is to wax valiant in the midst of struggle. And this puts the Christian in marvelous harmony with the spirit of the age in which we live. There never was a time when men so thirsted for power as they do now. Emerson, in his essay on "Power," says: "Life is a search after power, and this is an element with which the world is so saturated—there is no chink or crevice in which it is not lodged—that no honest seeking goes unrewarded."

We may see the indications of this ambition for power in all the every-day life of our times. The mammoth corporations and trusts, which gather into themselves a hundred or more of the smaller firms of a generation ago, are a peculiar development of this spirit. It is because the great trust has a power which the small partnerships could not wield. The long, strong arm of the gigantic corporation is able to gather far and wide, to dictate to Legislatures and Congresses; because, when so massed in solid phalanx, wealth is power. I am not speaking in defense of this sort of thing, or saying that it is beneficial or praiseworthy—Heaven forbid! I am only using it as an illustration, which is

easily grasped, of the spirit of the time in which we live.

Modern scientific investigation has revealed to us many things about the unwasting power of nature, and has proved that the Bible idea of the ever-present God in all things, from the greatest to the smallest, is true. In barbaric ages, as among rude and untaught people to-day, men went to an earthquake or an avalanche or a simoon for signs of power; but as we study into these things, we come to know that the power of the avalanche is present in every wandering flake of snow. The power of the thunderbolt, that fells at a single blow the giant monarch of the forest, trembles on our own fingertips, and flows as a steady current of life along the baby's nerves. If you have seen a prairie on fire, stretching away for miles on miles of billowing flame, you have seen a very impressive sight. If you have seen a great mountain forest on fire at night, with ten thousand great pines or hemlock-trees wrapped in fire and standing out like giant torches on the mountain side, you have witnessed a spectacle still grander. Or, if you have felt some volcano, like Vesuvius, shudder beneath your feet, while its vomited flames glared out against the midnight sky, you have

felt emotions you can never forget. But, after all, there is not a book-keeper here who footed up his columns of figures at the bank or in the counting-room last night without a brain-fire, the real significance of which outshone the burning prairie or forest, or the more sublime flames of Vesuvius. For we are coming to understand that power is no longer a matter of mountains and oceans, but of human brains and hearts. Every thinking, loving, hating, fearing, hoping, believing man or woman is a walking furnace, hotter than Nebuchadnezzar's, and the fuel that sustains its fires is not wood or coal, but nerves and blood and brain, and that divine elixir of life which God only can bestow.

It is right we should have this thirst for power. It is in the charter of our creation. God made us to have dominion; but God forbid that we should be satisfied with anything less than the highest and noblest kind of power. There are some kinds of power it is easy for us to measure. If we know the velocity and weight, it is easy for us to measure the force of a cannon-ball. We can calculate through how much iron-plating it will forge its way at the end of a certain distance. But that explosion of vitality by which the Psalms were shot out of the brain

and heart of David and thrown across the centuries—who shall measure that? That marvelous projectile force by which the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians goes on through generation after generation, making tender the hearts of each new multitude of selfish men and women—who will figure out such mental and spiritual dynamics as that?

The physical world so surrounds us, so floods us, that it is likely to receive far more attention than it deserves. We need constantly to be reminded that the things which are seen are temporal, but that the things which are unseen and spiritual are abiding and eternal. Just as surely as there is a physical force in the elements, which drives a vessel upon the rocks and strews its wreckage along the seashore, or power in the moonbeam to lift uncounted tons of water in tides from the ocean's bed; and another intellectual force of thought which lights up century after century, from Moses to Paul, from Paul to Shakespeare, and from Shakespeare to Gladstone, with its unwasting flame,—just so surely there is a spiritual force in the heart of God, reproduced, more or less clearly in every age of the world's history, in the hearts and lives of those who have been sharers of the divine nature.

When I walk out, these June days, and look at the flowers, admiring their beautiful coloring, and breathing in with gratification their pleasing fragrance, I am assured that there is a physical force resident in the sun that has definite and harmonious relations with seeds and roots that are in the mold of the earth, and the application of that far-off force has produced this wonderful vision of glory which I see in the rose-bush or the rhododendron. So when I walk out among men, and I see them in the midst of trial, of temptation to selfishness and vice, remain pure and true, denying themselves for others; giving up their own ease and pleasure that they may help the fallen and the weak; getting their gladness and their joy, not by receiving, but by giving; counting it all joy to suffer, that the right may live and the truth reign,—when I see all this, I know that there is a spiritual force which has its home in the heart of God, which has definite and harmonious relations with these human souls, and calls into life within them every holy impulse and noble thought.

Let us enrich ourselves to-night with the spiritual wealth there is in this great conception of Christ's concerning the possibility of our Christian lives. If there is any one listening to

me who feels that his own life has been sluggish and crippled and dwarfed, almost as helpless as the jelly-fish, which takes its shape from whatever presses against it, I would that there might be inspiration in our study this evening to arouse you to believe—what is certainly the truth—that there are spiritual resources possible for every one of us to sustain us in triumphant and useful life.

We are learning, in these days of marvelous inventions and of new combinations and adaptation of force, that a man is strong only as he is allied with mighty forces. "Give me a place to stand," said Archimedes, "and I will move the world." And some of the feats of our time make us willing to believe that almost anything is possible, in a physical way, when human ingenuity is allied with simple, underlying forces of the universe. Not along ago an advertisement in the Chicago evening papers called for six hundred workmen, to meet at the corner of two streets on a certain morning. When the hour arrived, the six hundred necessary workers were selected from the crowd, and each man was set to work at a jackscrew, and began to turn in concert at a given signal. Before evening a massive eight-story building was raised to a newer grade in the

street. Six hundred ordinary men, picked up from among the idlers of the street, with ordinary jackscrews in their hands, had raised four million pounds more than their own weight with perfect ease.

Now, if the law of mechanics teaches us to use such powers as these, we ought not to be so slow as we are in learning the simple laws of the spiritual life. Our Lord Jesus Christ says that all power in heaven and in earth is his. He also says that those who love him and keep his commandments may ask what they will, and it shall be done for them; but without him they can do nothing.

All things are possible to him that believeth. If we yield ourselves to the divine magnetic leadership of Jesus Christ, no spiritual enemies can stand against us. One of the most thrilling episodes in Roman history is that of the battle of Lake Regillus. One after another the champions of the young republic fell before the furious onslaughts of the Latins. The Romans seemed almost to have lost the day and their independence, when suddenly at their head appeared two youths, matchless in form and apparel, leading another charge against the enemy. The fainting patriots took heart, made a final effort,

and won the day. When the battle was done, and they bethought themselves to return thanks to their deliverers, the young knights were not to be found; and ever after they believed that they had been divinely led and rescued from defeat.

The struggle against sin which goes on in an earnest human soul is a far sorer conflict than any out of which arose a State; but when a Christian finds himself ready to despair and submit to defeat, there rings in his ears the cheering call of a leader before whose prowess the powers of evil are scattered like chaff in a tempest. When this battle, too, is won, and the panting victor asks, "Who is this that is glorious in his apparel, mighty to save?" he can not but confess, in his wonder and gratitude, "Surely this was the Son of God."

II.

We have also, in the figure we are studying, a suggestion of illumination. In Christ's thought the Christian watchman has not only his loins girded about for power, but he carries a light which is brightly burning. David recognized that he was "a candle of the Lord." And Christ says of Christians that they are "the light of the world;" and he commanded the early dis-

ciples to let their light shine. An unlighted spiritual nature can give out no illumination. Many Churches are dark, and in a sad sense illustrate the proverb about "a dim religious light," because there are so many whose natures give out little or no spiritual illumination.

Mr. Moody says that when he was holding meetings in London the first time, he noticed a well-dressed lady who was a regular attendant at all the services. She always managed to get a seat in about the same position in the hall, near the platform. She was a most attentive listener. She never engaged in the singing, but sat through all the services with a perfectly contented and satisfied expression on her face. Day after day through three or four weeks he watched her. She had become a sort of fascination. One day he asked a lady who occupied a seat on the choir platform if she knew her.

"O yes," was the reply, "very well."

"Is she a Christian?"

"No," replied the lady, with an abrupt tone of voice as if she did not care to say anything more about her, "she is a bog."

"A bog?" Mr. Moody repeated, not quite understanding what was meant.

"Yes," was the short, sharp reply, "a bog."

Still mystified, he repeated the question, "a bog?"

"Yes a B-O-G, spelled with capital letters: that's what she is. Don't you know what a bog is?"

"Yes, I think I do," he replied. "In our country at least, it is a bit of marshy ground, or a stagnant pond, which catches the surface water of the surrounding country, but which has no outlet. It is usually covered with a green slime and is the home of wild water-weeds and all sorts of frogs and reptiles."

"Well, that is what she is. She is a bog. She is found at all the religious meetings in London. She is a stagnant marsh. She has an unlimited capacity for hearing sermons, and receiving all kinds of religious instruction, but she has no outlet. She is never known to do anything for Christ. She never speaks to a soul. She never gives to any cause, though she has money. She never does anything but absorb, absorb, absorb. She is a bog. We have a lot of them in London, and that is what we call them."

Alas! I fear there are bogs in all our churches—many people upon whom God's face shines in great tenderness and love, people upon whom God has bestowed many gifts; and yet

they carry no bright light of gratitude or devotion, which makes them wherever they are a witness for Christ.

A very ordinary taper may dispel a great deal of darkness, if it burns with a clear flame. And so a very common nature, as the world judges it, may dispel a great deal of spiritual darkness, and be of unmeasured blessing, if it is lighted at the heavenly fires. A dear old lady who was very old and poor and feeble in health, but whose bright, cheery, Christian experience so pervaded the whole community where she lived that she was the most universally loved personality in it, was once asked by a company of younger people how it was that, despite all the sorrows and vicissitudes of her life, she had come to have such a magnetic and winning personality? With wet eyes and softened tones, the dear old saint said: "All this I have obtained by making much of Jesus." And there is not one of us here to-night who may not obtain a constant and complete victory over every sin that besets us by making much of Jesus.

Jere Macauley once left the platform in his chapel, and walking down the aisle amid the motley throng, said in substance: "Now ain't I respectable? Have n't I good clothes, and friends?"

Here's Mr. Hatch, the banker, and a friend of mine. Why I've got money in my pocket [clinking the change as he spoke]. And here's my watch. Ain't it handsome! It's a regular ticker [turning it over admiringly in his hand]. But it has n't always been so with Jere Macauley. Wife and I have slept many a night on yonder dock, drunk. I've been to the 'works' several times. But the last time I was there I heard a minister, who said he had been a sinner too, but that God had pardoned him, and even thought him worthy to be a preacher. So I was encouraged to think God could make something even out of Jere, and it led to my conversion. And what was for me is for you. Why, when wife there, and I went out on our visit to Chicago, they treated us as if we were distinguished people; and I just had to tell those folks I'm only Jere Macauley. It is the Lord Jesus who has done it all for me." And because of that perfect simplicity and devotion, seeking only to shine for the Master, God was able to use that poor taper to far more advantage to the world's good than many another splendid candle set in a costly candlestick of birth and culture and position.

III.

We have finally a suggestion of watchfulness. In Christ's conception, the ideal Christian is not only one whose loins are girt about for power, and whose light is brightly burning, but whose whole attitude is like unto one who waits for his lord. If we are wise, we will be watchful and alert to catch the slightest wish of our Divine Master. Do you remember the story of Philip and the eunuch? How, as he was passing along, it did not take a thunderclap of Divine power to make known to him his duty; but the Spirit of God, in the still, small voice, whispered to his sensitive ear, and on the instant he ran after the chariot of the man whom he was to win to Christ. How many chariots pass by us unnoticed, because we are sluggish or asleep! How many times we impoverish our days, and come to the even-time with a sense of spiritual pauperism, not because we have committed outbreking sins, but because we have been dull and indifferent to the spiritual opportunities of the day that might have refreshed us and glorified us! Margaret Sangster sings a little song entitled "At Sunset," which is worth a moment's meditation :

"It is n't the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you've left undone,

Which gives you a bit of heartache
At the setting of the sun.
The tender word forgotten,
The letter you did not write,
The flower you might have sent, dear,
Are your haunting ghosts to-night.

The stone you might have lifted
Out of a brother's way,
The bit of heartsome counsel
You were hurried too much to say;
The loving touch of the hand, dear,
The gentle and winsome tone,
That you had no time or thought for,
With troubles enough of your own ;

The little act of kindness,
So easily out of mind,
Those chances to be angels
Which every mortal finds,—
They come in night and silence,
Each chill reproachful wraith,
When hope is faint and flagging,
And a blight has dropped on faith.

For life is all too short, dear,
And sorrow is all too great
To suffer our slow compassion
That tarries until too late;
And it's not the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you the bit of heartache
At the setting of the sun."

We ought to keep our souls responsive to the presence of God's Spirit. The photographer could teach us a lesson. He is well aware that

the invisible, imponderable light will not come down on his plate like a power-press. He knows that he must woo it and win it to express itself in visible lines. He patiently labors, therefore, on the plate itself; with chemical agents and careful elaboration, he sensitizes its surface till it feels the touch of light as keenly as a bare nerve feels a blow. So our souls need to be sensitized by completeness of self-surrender to God. By meditation upon God's goodness, by reading of the Bible, by secret communion and prayer, the soul may grow responsive to the slightest impress of the power from on high. If we are thus sensitive to the presence of God, we shall see him day by day in the affairs of life; life will be enlarged to us; the horizon will lift, and we shall become spiritually far-sighted.

There is an old picture of Columbus's first sight of the New World. It is a striking scene. Around him, on the deck of the vessel, a group of his sailors are lying asleep. The grandest event in modern history signifies nothing to them. In the stillness of the night stands the great explorer, with his hand above his forehead, and his whole soul shining in his eyes. That sublime fire of genius and purpose, which in the absence of steam had burned its own way across

the Atlantic, flames up now in his gaze. He has caught sight of a light moving about on the far-off shore. Toward that his thoughts, that outstrip the slow vessel, are all flying forward. So, brothers and sisters, we who are the disciples of Jesus Christ, while others sleep and are indifferent, must be alert and in earnest to catch the purpose of our Master. Every day, every hour of our common life becomes full of romantic possibilities when we live it in that spirit. Every man who needs our sympathy and our help then stands to us in the stead of our Master and our Lord; for has not Christ said that in the final accounting it shall be decided that, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me?" Only when all humanity comes to bear the stamp of Christ upon it in our view will it yield to us the wealth of gold which it is possible for the sons of God to gather.

Through Rochester, New York, runs the Genesee River, between steep and rocky banks. There are falls in the river, and dark recesses. One day a man who lived in the city had just arrived on the train from a journey. He was anxious to go home and meet his wife and children. He was hurrying along the streets with a

bright vision of home in his mind, when he saw on the bank of the river a lot of excited people.

"What is the matter?" he shouted.

"A boy is in the water!" several answered.

"Why do n't you save him?" he asked.

In a moment, throwing down his carpet-bag and pulling off his coat, he jumped into the stream, grasped the boy in his arms, and struggled with him to the shore. And as he wiped the water from his dripping face, and brushed back the hair, he cried till they could hear him a hundred yards away, "O God, it is my boy!" He plunged in for the boy of somebody else, and saved his own. The whole world is built on that key. The people who forget themselves in devotion to God and their duty, and who see in their brother's good a wreath of glory on the head of Christ—all the universe is responsible for their care, and they realize the promise that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

XI.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CREDENTIALS.

"To be spiritually minded is life and peace."—ROMANS VIII, 6.

THE supreme art of Christianity, or secret of becoming a Christian, is to acquire the spirit of Jesus Christ. Paul says: "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." To be spiritually minded, in the Christian sense, is to come into fellowship with the spirit of Christ; to come into such magnetic touch with him that his attitude toward God and man, toward life and death and eternity, toward this world and other worlds, becomes our own.

Margaret Fuller, I think, it was who said, "What the world needs more than anything else is a spiritually minded man of the world;" that is, a man who lives in the world, appreciates its needs, takes hold with strong hands to supply them, and yet has a reverent eye upon Him who made the world, and who is seeking to discipline and cultivate immortal natures within it.

Christianity, therefore, more than any other religion, is an incarnate life. Lord Houghton,

the poet, has very clearly expressed the difference between the Koran and the Bible—between Mohammed and Jesus:

“Mohammed's truth lay in a holy book,
Christ's in a sacred life.

So while the world rolls on from change to change
And realms of thought expand,
The letter stands without expanse or range,
Stiff as a dead man's hand;
While, as the life-blood fills the growing form,
The spirit Christ has shed
Flows through the ripening ages fresh and warm,
More felt than heard or read.”

Our text, perhaps more definitely than any other Scripture in the Bible, sets forth in its essence this new life with which Christ is transforming the world. It asserts that the spiritual mind is life and peace. These are the credentials of a Christian. The Christian is to be a man vital with the life of God, alive in every department of his being, and yet controlling that life in peace—the peace of Christ.

Men and women bearing these credentials are the supreme evidence of Christianity. As another has well said: “The logic of Christianity is the demonstration of God in the life—the outward manifestation of a divine impulse. We are known by the fruits of the Spirit. Christianity discovers itself in the argument of facts, and

needs no theory to explain its reality. Its outcome is love and charity, and its reward the benediction of the poor and needy, and the gratitude of the sorrowing and the oppressed. Christ in the heart is the light of the life, shedding its divine influence upon the miseries surrounding us, and scattering the enshrouding gloom."

Life, then, is the first credential of a Christian. As the leaves and flowers and fruit are the credentials of a tree, so a Christian life—a spiritual life, a life bearing the rich fruits of the Spirit—are the credentials of a Christian. Christ makes this very clear in that wonderful "vine chapter" in John's Gospel. In that he says, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away;" and again, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

Simply not to do is wicked. To be good for nothing is to be bad. The Master says: "He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." On these July afternoons the farmer has only to leave his mown grass alone, and the evening winds will toss and scatter it. The only way to keep it from scattering by neglect is to gather, and thus to save it. So he who does not gather with Christ, scatters abroad in his influence and life toward worldliness and sin,

What a remarkable illustration there is of the truth of that statement in the circumstances connected with the death of John the Baptist! A writer of one of the Gospels assures us that Herod greatly regretted to be compelled to destroy John the Baptist. He had heard him with great interest, and though John had rebuked him for his sin, he admired the brave preacher, and we have no reason to believe that he was angered by him, or had any revengeful feelings toward him. But he finally ordered his murder because of the weight of influence unconsciously brought to bear by his silent guests who were sitting about his table.

We are told that he did not do it to please the dancing girl, nor her mother—Herodias—alone, but that he felt compelled to do it because of his guests. Those people who sat about his table, by the pressure of their silence and inaction, drove this weak man to do the wicked deed. How many times do we see this repeated in our own day! The Christian Church is often responsible for, or at least a partaker of, other men's sins by its silence, when Legislatures or Congresses or other governmental officials are being tempted or petitioned to outrage righteousness. Bishop Hurst well says

that "the Church that sleeps in the presence of crime, deserves to die, and be buried in the nearest ecclesiastical potter's field."

A dead tree cumberes the ground. It takes the place that might be made beautiful and serviceable by another tree. So a dead professor of the Christian life is a cumberer of the ground. All beautiful things about him are not able to clothe his own heart and life with beauty and grace, any more than it is possible for the beautiful living plants and flowers of the field to glorify the dead snag. On the other hand, a living tree finds all the world around, above, and beneath it, full of nourishment for itself. Life attracts life. Life in the tree attracts it from the ground, from the thunder-shower, from the atmosphere, and from the sun. Each tree attracts life after its kind. The oak finds what is necessary to make acorns, and the pine, nutrition for its cones.

So spiritual life attracts to itself that which feeds and sustains, beautifies and enlarges itself. And this world, which sometimes seems so like chaos, which we are tempted to call a desert or a wilderness, is, after all, peculiarly adapted to feed spiritual life. As in modern agriculture they are finding fertilizing rocks hidden away in the

great sea-cliffs, so the soul that has learned the secret of God finds the way to the sweetest honey hidden among the flinty rocks. The young Samson, yet unspoiled by the lusts of a sensual life, found honey in the carcass of a lion. Jonathan, David's bosom friend, found honey on the battle-field. And so the Christian of to-day, who lives in communion with Christ and walks in fellowship with him, finds sustenance in the carcass of the lion he has slain, and abundant resources of blessing and comfort on the sorest battle-fields of his daily life.

Many make the great mistake of supposing that the spiritual life consists in some marvelous, unexplained halo of glory, which may be bestowed, ready-made, upon the Christian. But this is not true. Spiritual life is given to the believing and seeking soul; but that life is to be developed, it is to grow and blossom and bear its fruit, in the midst of the hard conditions of this sinful world. We are to get ready for the heaven to come by living in the heavenly spirit, in the midst of ordinary earthly conditions. Elwyn Hoffman portrays, in a little song, the way distance often deceives us:

"O, white is the sail in the Far Away,
And dirty the sail at the dock;

And fair are the cliffs across the bay,
And black is the near-by rock.
Though glitters the snow on the peaks afar,
At our feet it is only white;
And bright is the gleam of the distant star,
Though a lamp was twice as bright!

The rose that nods beyond our reach
Is redder than rose of ours;
Of thought that turns our tongues to speech,
Our fellows leave greater dowers;
The waters that flow from the hidden springs
Are sweeter than those by our side.
So we strive through life for these distant things,
And never are satisfied!

So we strive through life for these distant things;
But ever they hold their place,
Till beats Life's drum, and Death doth come,
And we look in his mocking face.
And the distant things crowd near and close,
And, faith! they are dingy and gray;
For the charm is lost when the line is crossed
'Twixt Here and Far Away!

For the charm is lost when the line is crossed,
And we see all things as they are;
And know that as clean is the sail at the dock
As the sail on the sea afar;
As bright the rays of the near-by lamp
As the gleam of the distant star!"

Let us learn the lesson, alike of the poet and the apostle. Our Christian life is to work out its glorious destiny here and now. If we are to have white sails to our ship on the sea of glass, we must have white sails now, as we unfurl

them to these earthly winds, or as they swing beside the every-day docks of our human life. If we are to be such lovable natures that angels shall be glad to associate with us in heaven, it is high time that we begin to develop, with all the devotion of our souls, the graces that make men and women lovable now.

We need to rid ourselves of that dangerous heresy which divorces what is known as the spiritual from what we are pleased to call the secular in our human lives. To the really spiritually-minded man all life is important and sacred. George MacDonald says: "Life and religion are one, or neither is anything. I will not say," says the poet-preacher, "neither is growing to be anything. Religion is no way of life, no show of life, no observance of any sort. It is neither the food nor the medicine of being. It is life essential."

Now, the splendid assurance of our text is, that it is possible to live a life thus vital and full of the glorious consciousness of being, and yet maintain peace. Indeed, life and peace are given as the two wings, as it were, of the spiritual life, or rather as the two great branches which grow up out of the soul's trunk of spiritual being.

To be alive, and yet to be at peace, is a problem the world has never been able to solve. Wicked men seem sometimes, for awhile, to have peace; but it is only when they are dead to their condition—either unconscious of their danger, or unaware of their spiritual possibilities. Herod seemed to have peace for a time, after he had murdered John the Baptist; but when he heard about the miracles of Christ, all this false peace forsook him, and he shuddered with fear as he exclaimed: "It is John, whom I beheaded!"

The Christian is the only man on earth who is both alive and at peace at the same time. Wicked men have life, but no peace, or peace, but no life; but a Christian has both. This peaceful life, or living peace, is not a ready-made grace, but one woven by the exercise of one's own gifts. It is a peace in the midst of trial and hardship, which is possible because it is triumphant over them—a peace which is the outgrowth of a love, a devotion, a faith, which casts out all fear.

Dr. Fisher, editor of the *Pacific Christian Advocate*, relates a beautiful little incident which occurred up among the summits of the Northern Sierras, in California. A pioneer family lived in a lonely cabin, which stood in a clearing of a

few acres, in the heart of a dense mountain forest. It was a region where bears, catamounts, and California lions yet resisted the approach of civilization, and where almost every night their dismal howlings could be heard. One night the father was absent, and only the mother, a little girl twelve years old, and the smaller children, were at home. About midnight the mother was taken violently ill. To the child it seemed that she must soon have help, or that she must die. A neighbor must be called. The nearest house was over a mile distant, by a narrow mountain trail, through dark woods, where wild beasts made their lair. The bravest hunter would walk warily through that mountain defile, after night-fall, even with his gun. But the heroic little girl did not hesitate. She ran that perilous path alone, in the dead of night, to seek help for the dear sufferer. "Were you not afraid?" Dr. Fisher asked. "No," she said; "I saw only the white face of my mother all the way."

Love conquered fear, and gave wings to her feet, and made the darkness to be as noonday about her. She ran that dangerous mountain trail at midnight in perfect peace, so far as the danger was concerned, because of the love which exalted her. So the Christian may pursue the

loneliest trail of human life, through dark forests where he can not see, near the lair of spiritual enemies, and yet walk in perfect peace, if his soul is aflame with love for Christ, and he is buoyed up by devotion to the great work which his Master is doing in the world.

Selfishness is the greatest foe of the Christian's peace. If the little girl in the Sierra Mountains had forgotten her mother, and her great love for her, and had begun to think about her own condition, and let her mind run upon the personal dangers she was undergoing, she would have given up her brave mission entirely. It was her self-forgetfulness that made it possible. So it is through self-forgetfulness in service for others that the Christian comes to the highest peace.

A diver, who went down to work on the steamship *Vescaya*, which was sunk in a collision off Barnegat Light, had a weird experience. It was a difficult job, so two divers were sent down—one of them to remain on deck, in sixty feet of water, to act as second tender to the other diver, who went below. The latter had been below but a few minutes when three jerks came over the life-line. When he had been hauled up on the deck, he was so unnerved that he for-

got he was still in sixty feet of water, and signaled to have his helmet removed. When both divers had been hauled to the surface, he said that while he was working through a gangway he had seen two huge objects coming toward him; and nothing could dissuade him from the belief that he had seen two submarine ghosts until the other diver went down, and discovered that there was a mirror at the end of the gangway, and that the diver had seen the reflection of his own legs, vastly enlarged, coming toward him.

Many a Christian has lost his peace, and given way to terror and confusion, and finally to despair, through too much looking at himself. A morbid self-inspection is a serious danger to some temperaments. But the Christian who forgets himself in devotion to his Master, and goes steadily on about his duty, trusting the result to Him, has a peace which the world knows nothing of, and which the world has as little power to destroy as it has to bestow. There is an old story told of how Whitelock, when he was about to embark as Cromwell's envoy to Sweden in 1655, was much disturbed in mind as he rested in Harwich on the preceding night, which was very stormy. He paced the floor reflecting

on the distracted state of the nation. A confidential servant slept in an adjacent bed to the one prepared for Whitelock. Finding that his master could not sleep, he said:

"Pray, sir, will you give me leave to ask you a question?"

"Certainly."

"Pray, sir, do n't you think God governed the world very well before you came into it?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And pray, sir, do n't you think that he will govern it quite as well when you are gone out of it?"

"Certainly."

"Then, sir, pray excuse me, but do n't you think you may as well trust Him to govern it as long as you are in it?"

To this question Whitelock had nothing to reply, and, profiting by the rebuke, he was soon able to quiet his disturbed mind and fall into a peaceful sleep.

"Do the nearest duty,
Grateful that your hand
May do the work that angels
Never could have planned;
So shall love eternal
Into life be wrought,
And a blessing spring from
E'en your humblest thought."

XII.

THE RIVER OF PEACE.

"Then had thy peace been as a river."—ISAIAH XLVIII, 18.

THIS ought to be a refreshing theme on this summer Sunday morning. In our human lives, broken as they are so often into fragmentary experiences, the cry of the soul for peace is a very natural one, and common to us all. There are hours of disappointment and weariness in the most successful and prosperous careers, when we sigh with the poet:

"O for the peace that floweth like a river,
Making life's desert places bloom and smile;
O for the faith to grasp heaven's bright 'forever,'
Amid the shadows of earth's 'little while!'"

It is suggestive of the honor which God puts upon us as his children, that he uses such splendid things with which to compare the emotions and experiences of our lives. The picture we are to study is one of peculiar dignity and beauty. There is in all nature nothing more interesting, more beautiful, or more beneficent than a river.

The history of the human race has been writ-

ten along the course of its famous streams. The Nile, the Euphrates, the Indus, the Ganges, and the Jordan of the Eastern world, and the Rhine, the Danube, the Tiber, the Rubicon, the Seine, and the Thames of Europe, have directed the stream of history, as well as the course of empire and civilization. In our own land, how great a part have the Hudson, the Ohio, the Missouri, the Mississippi, and the beautiful Columbia played in the building up of our great Republic!

It is this splendid figure of the river which God uses to describe the peace which is the possible and normal condition of a Christian soul. Let us study the figure with sincere hearts, and endeavor to find in it the water of life.

I.

A Christian's peace is like a river in its high and lofty source. A river can not be produced without lofty mountains from whence to draw its nourishment. It must be fed by the clouds, and have for its reservoir the vast treasures of the heavens. There never was a king powerful enough, or a great trust rich enough, to be able to produce a river. Great rivers are born among the lonely mountain summits, far away from the

haunts of man, where the high pinnacles of the rocks wrestle with the winter snows, and, in that lofty communion with nature's God, win the rich abundance which is to refresh the valleys thousands of miles away.

Henry M. Stanley discovered the source of the Nile in the far-off Mountains of the Moon, many hundreds and even thousands of miles away from the peoples that depend so entirely upon it for their very existence. The Mississippi River, which gives life and fertility to the great middle section of our own country, has its loftiest source through the Missouri among the lofty, snow-clad heights of the Rocky Mountains. The Columbia River, the most splendid and magnificent of them all, in the purity of its blue floods and the grandeur of the scenery through which it flows, is born amid the loftiest heights of the North, in a sublime and awful region where snow-clad summits stand around in groups,

"Like sudden ghosts in snowy shrouds,
New broken through their earthly bars,
And eagles whet with crooked beaks
The lofty limits of the peaks."

Thus it is that the great rivers, far above and beyond man's power to produce, are pre-eminently the creation and gift of God.

So the source of the Christian's peace is in the heaven above. No minister, however eminent; no church, however sacred or ancient; no ceremony, however solemn or magnificent, is able to bestow peace upon a human soul. True peace can only have its beginning in lonely and secret fellowship with God. As Jesus sought the mountains in the night to commune with the Father, and came down calm and peaceful in the morning to bear unmoved the insults of the mob, so we shall find that peace comes into the heart in hours of quiet meditation and communion with God.

In those lofty places of secret fellowship, clouds of divine grace, big with richest mercies, fall in abundant showers upon us, filling the deep places of the soul, and, flowing on, give comfort in all the ordinary and trying experiences of our lives.

II.

The peace of the good man is like a river, in the way in which it is sustained. The river must be sustained by the rain and the snow which come from the same great reservoirs from whence it had its origin. So the river of peace in our souls can only be sustained by prayer and the study of God's Word. How many there are whose

hearts present only an empty channel, like a dried-up river's bed in time of some great drought! This need never be our sad condition. The Christian's peace is called, in the Bible, "the peace of God," because it must ever come fresh from him; and, to those who trust him and live in constant fellowship with him, he gives always an abundant supply.

The beautiful hymn in our Hymnal beginning

"Commit thou all thy griefs
And ways into His hands,"

was written by Paul Gerhardt at a time when, with his wife, he had been driven out of Berlin because of his evangelical faith. They were so poor that they had to travel on foot in their exile; and one evening, while his wife, greatly depressed, was resting from the weary day's journey in a little wayside inn, Gerhardt strolled away into a little grove, meditating upon God's strange providences, when the thought of this hymn was born in his mind and heart, and he wrote out the first verses on a little slip of paper as he walked back to the inn:

"Commit thou all thy griefs
And ways into His hands,
To his sure trust and tender care
Who earth and heaven commands.

Who points the clouds their course,
Whom winds and seas obey,
He shall direct thy wandering feet,
He shall prepare thy way.

Give to the winds thy fears,
Hope, and be undismayed;
God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears,
He shall lift up thy head.
Through waves and clouds and storms
He gently clears thy way;
Wait thou his time, so shall this night
Soon end in joyous day."

As he entered his room in the inn, and saw his weeping wife and remembered his helplessness in a worldly point of view, he added two other stanzas without saying anything of them to her:

"Still heavy is thy heart?
Still sink thy spirits down?
Cast off the weight, let fear depart,
And every care begone!
What though thou rulest not?
Yet heaven and earth and hell
Proclaim, God sitteth on the throne
And ruleth all things well!

Leave to his sovereign sway
To choose and to command;
So shalt thou, wondering, own his way,
How wise, how strong his hand!
Far, far above thy thought
His counsel shall appear,
When fully he the work hath wrought
That caused thy needless fear."

It was but an hour after these beautiful verses were written when two men rode up to the inn door and inquired for the Lutheran preacher and poet, Paul Gerhardt. Although he dreaded some new calamity, he was brave as ever in his stand for the right, and cried out: "I am Paul Gerhardt; what will you have?" "We are ambassadors from Duke William," replied one of the men, "who not only sends you his earnest sympathy in your persecutions, but invites you hereafter to make your home with him." With tears coursing down his cheeks, but with beaming countenance, he went back to his wife, and, telling her the good news, he handed her the hymn he had just written, and, opening the paper, she was the first one to read the words that have comforted so many thousands of hearts since. God is as able to sustain our peace as he was that of the exile poet.

III.

Peace is like a river in its onward course. It can not choose its channel, but must flow within its own. The channel is often rugged and winding. The beauty of its stream, so far as its harmonious course is concerned, is often destroyed by chafing on the rocks. Ever and

anon it is broken by cataracts, and is often lost to view in the deep, dark shadows of overhanging mountains and dense forests.

No river is able to move all its obstacles out of the way, yet the river does not give up in despair because it is opposed. It goes on plunging around the boulders, singing merrily where it frets against the rocks, rising to a hallelujah chorus in some great waterfall. Indeed the rougher the channel, the more picturesque, the more romantic, the more musical the stream.

We ought to get out of this a lesson, teaching us something of the conditions of the peace of God promised to us. Our peace is to flow through its own channel—a channel walled in by our own hearts, not somebody's else. It is a channel that will many times have clouds overshadowing it. It will run through many a rough and rocky mountain gorge. For it is a river on earth, with the conditions of the earth about it, and we must not expect that all the opposition will be taken out of the way for it.

Paul knew what the peace of God was—the peace “that passeth all understanding,” “the peace that casts out all fear”—and he lived, “always rejoicing;” yet he had opposition enough, surely. He was stoned, beaten with rods, ship-

wrecked, made to fight with beasts, and endured long imprisonments. What a rugged channel that was for a human life, and for a river of peace! And yet the waters that flowed therein were from heaven itself. It is a characteristic of earthly rivers, that where the channel is the roughest, the waters are the purest and sweetest. In the summer-time we like to go away up into the mountains where the stream is whipped into foam upon the rocks, plunges wildly over the cascades, cold and fragrant and fresh from its heavenly distillery among the cloud-topped mountain summits. So many of us have found that when the life channel was most rugged, the peace of the soul was most delicious.

Good old Doctor Muhlenberg wrote the hymn, "I would not live alway," when he had the blues; and, on recovering from his depression, he never wanted to hear it sung, and always regretted that it had gotten into the hymn-books.

Lyman Beecher was once congratulated by one of his boys that his battles were all fought; but the old hero was indignant, and, drawing himself up to his full height, exclaimed: "I thank no boy of mine to talk to me so. If I could have my way, I'd buckle on the armor and fight the battles all over again." The ag-

gressive, triumphant spirit which only gains in force by opposition,—that is the characteristic of the peace coming to us from God.

When Uncle John Vassar, the humble colporteur, was taken prisoner by the Confederates at Gettysburg, he went straight up to General Early and said: "General, do you love Jesus?" The general said to his orderly: "Let that man go, or we shall have a prayer-meeting all the way to Richmond." A life so abounding in spiritual peace can not be captured or put down.

IV.

Peace is like a river in its gracious and benevolent influence. We can not conceive of anything more delightful in its beneficence and generosity than a river. Throughout its entire course it is constantly bestowing its gifts on every hand. Wherever it proceeds on its winding way, it waters the earth and everything that grows therein. The great trees—the fir and the pine, the hemlock and the spruce of the mountains, the oak, the maple, and the ash of the foot-hills, the alder, the birch, and the willow of the lower valleys—all send their rootlets into the river, and drink. The horses, the patient cattle, the flocks of sheep, come to the river, and are re-

freshed. Farm-house, village and city grow up about it, and draw ever from its generous bosom.

The very life of a river is bound up in its generosity. If it were to cease to flow, it would stagnate and become, instead of an artery full of life-blood, a cause of plague and death.

So it is with the peace of the Christian. He can not have it unless it is his purpose to be generous and beneficent. Many lives are empty because they are selfish. Many people are only clanging cymbals because they have refused to make the music which would have charmed sorrowing ears. We are disciples of Him who "went about doing good." And we can not have his peace unless we follow in his footsteps. As the river brings the snows of the far-off mountains and the treasures of the lofty clouds across hundreds of miles of desert to refresh the hot and dusty town and city, so the Christian, who is true to God and lives in blessed communion and fellowship with Christ, brings down a heavenly element to gladden the earth and to refresh downcast and despairing souls.

V.

The Christian's peace is like a river in its growth. It has been my happy fortune to stand

at the birthplace of some great streams, and to see the single little pool on the flat top of a mountain range which marked the beginning of some great river; to see oozing out from the pool a little stream, the course of which could be stayed or changed by my hand; and then to watch it as it grows until it becomes a rill, and from the right and left other rills trickle down from beneath the moss-covered rocks; and then it is a brook, a place to throw your trout-line with hope; and other brooks come down through narrow little mountain cañons, and the larger brook gets a song in its heart; it is big enough now to turn a mill, and plunges wildly on; other brooks large enough for mill-streams unite with it in solemn trysting places, and so on and on, until it becomes a river.

At first you could stop it with your hand; farther down you could leap across it with a single bound; still lower, and you seek out large boulders, and jump from one to another, and still cross with dry shoes; and then you have to ford it; a little farther on you must put a bridge across it; then great allies come in from north and south, adding their floods, deepening the channel. It is too wide now to be bridged, and you must have a ferry. At first this is held in

place by a rope. Farther on, as the river is broader, a long, iron cable sustains the ferry-boat in place; and then, as the river still widens and deepens, the cable is in turn outgrown, and the steamer, with its heart of fire, is your only practicable method of crossing the wide-spreading river. So the peace of God in the heart is like a river in its growth.

The Bible assures us, and our observation has taught us, that, when first converted, we are as babes in the Christian family, to be fed with "the sincere milk of the word." But we are to grow and wax strong in the faith. As we exercise the gifts which God has given us, Christian peace is developed. Remember that growth comes by activity. Many people, who are complaining that the Christian life has never meant for them what it did to Abraham or Elijah or Elisha or Paul, if they will look into their own lives, will see that the fault has been in their own failure to exercise the gifts given, and the opportunities for service, which would have developed within them a river of spiritual life and a flow of heavenly peace a thousand-fold more rich and splendid than anything the world, for which it was sacrificed, has been able to give.

The Protestant Episcopal missionary, Mr.

Aitkin, who visited this country some years since, declared that there was a spiritual torrid zone, as in nature, and that the people who did not work spiritually had no spiritual vigor or strength, but became only dress-parade members of the Church, one blast of adversity being able to annihilate them. He described a number of varieties of them; such as the get-up-late-Sunday-morning Christians, or the seldom-go-to-church Christians, or the stay-at-home-from-prayer-meeting-and-Sunday-school Christians, or the pay-as-little-as-possible Christians, or the drink-a-little-wine Christians, or the just-a-little-bit-crooked-in-business Christians, or the run-around-to-other-churches Christians, or the do n't-want-to-do-anything Christians.

May the good Lord save us from becoming a part of this catalogue! These characteristics are indications of spiritual poverty. They reveal a lack of that wholesome growth, that steady spiritual development, that constantly enlarging soul—growing more and more like God—feeling as the years go on that we are coming to be filled with the great purposes which God has to accomplish in the world.

I trust that no one of us will push away the solemn questioning of this thought from our own

hearts. Are we growing in grace? Are we becoming more heavenly-minded? Is the spirit of self-denial for Christ's sake, for the sake of the poor and the helpless, growing in power in our lives? Does the current of our lives set toward righteousness and true holiness? The angels are glad over "one sinner" that repents. Do our hearts bound with joy at the same glad tidings? Let us put these questions honestly, and seek to know if we are truly growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

VI.

Finally, the Christian's peace is like a river, at the close of its course on earth. When a great river like the Mississippi or the Columbia or the Amazon nears the ocean, the great sea does not wait for the river, but comes with welcoming hands for hundreds of miles up its channel to meet it. Away up at the cascades of the Columbia, the ocean tides rise and fall every day. And so when the Christian draws near to death, heaven comes to meet him. That is what Jesus means when he says: "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will

come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Not alone shall you walk into the dark shadows. No, indeed! You may put your hand up into the shadows over your head, and know that God shall clasp it and lead you safely on. With David you can say: "Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

XIII.

THE CONVERSION OF A TAX-COLLECTOR.

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—LUKE XIX, 10.

THERE is no more entertaining story in the Bible than this one which tells how Christ found Zaccheus, and how Zaccheus found his Lord. The man himself is interesting. There is always something interesting about the man whom the whole community hates. He has the sort of personal force about him that makes its mark wherever he goes, one way or another. Longfellow, in his "Hiawatha," sings of how you can trace the water-courses in different seasons, each season by a mark of its own:

"You could trace them through the valley,
By the rushing in the spring-time,
By the alders in the summer,
By the white fog in the autumn,
By the black line in the winter."

Zaccheus was the kind of man who always left his mark. It was a black line in his community. He had been shrewd and grasping in collecting the hated Roman tax, and he was universally unpopular.

If a respectable citizen was out walking, and he saw Zaccheus coming up the street, he would cross over to the other side or go around a block rather than have to meet him face to face. The business men who had to pay over their revenue taxes to him would have died rather than touch his hated hand in social equality. His family was ostracized. There were times, I suspect, when Zaccheus did not care much about this. He was fond of money, and the business paid well. And as his riches increased, and he was able to wear fine clothes, live in a good house, and loan money at a high rate of interest to the very people who hated him most, he crushed his better feelings down beneath his iron will and said: "I do n't care what they think, so long as I make money, and get to be the richest man in the town."

There are scores of men in Brooklyn, outside of the tax-collector's office, who are hardening their hearts and crushing their consciences under their heel, and trying to make themselves believe that they are satisfied with the gold which they get in exchange for manhood and those noble returns which come from brotherly sympathy and Christian fellowship.

But down at the bottom Zaccheus was not

satisfied. He had lonely hours when he longed for love and fellowship; days when the ghosts of his departed youth, and all the ideals and ambitions of his young manhood came back and looked on him sadly. At such times poor Zaccheus would shudder and say: "I'd give half of all my wealth if I knew how to get out of this ditch of selfishness and sin in which I have mired myself." But all these gloomy meditations had ended in nothing but hopelessness, until one day the news came that Jesus Christ was nearing the gates of Jericho; and, with the news, the startling rumor that a certain old blind man, a beggar, named Bartimeus, whom everybody knew, had stopped the procession that gathered about Christ, and for his audacity had gotten his eyesight, and could now see as well as anybody.

Zaccheus had heard about Christ before; for this tax-collector was one of those men whose ears are always open, wide-awake to catch anything of interest that is going on in the country. And so he had heard about Jesus, and there were many things about him that interested Zaccheus very much. In the first place, he noticed that the Pharisees and the leading business men among his own special enemies were also the

enemies of Christ. "A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind," and Zaccheus had a fellow-feeling for Christ.

The more he heard about this new teacher, and especially the more he heard him reviled by his enemies, the more Zaccheus longed to get acquainted with him, and for an opportunity to show him hospitality and kindness. And now he is coming to the town. Zaccheus hears it with the rest, and as the crowd began to gather—excitedly no doubt, as when there is a fire—Zaccheus pressed his way toward the front to get sight of the Master. But here he was at a disadvantage; for he was a little man with short legs, and in a crowd he had no chance to see at all. But Zaccheus had not worked his way up to be the richest publican in the town, in spite of opposition and hatred, for nothing. He was accustomed to use his head on difficult occasions. So, looking on beyond the crowd, and in direct line of the route along which Christ must come, he saw there was a sycamore-tree not so big but that a wiry little Jew might climb it, and yet big enough to bear up a small man. So Zaccheus pressed his way through, and ran on ahead of the crowd, toward the tree. I suspect some fellows in the crowd shouted out: "There goes

Zaccheus! He 'll get fooled this time. He 's going to tax the new-comer, I suppose; thinks he 's a rich man, and will have a big custom tax to pay. He 'll feel little enough when he sees him coming on foot, and without money enough to pay his night's lodging." But Zaccheus was not accustomed to hear anything good said of himself, so he probably did not listen, but got himself fixed for a good look at this new teacher, whose fame was beginning to fill all the land. As he came along, Zaccheus was wonderfully impressed with his appearance. It was different from anything he had ever seen. Compared with the hawk-faced money-getters with whom Zaccheus had been accustomed to strive and contend, the gentle and noble features of the Christ seemed, as they indeed were, a revelation from heaven itself.

As Zaccheus looked on that face, all his old self-disgust came back to him with redoubled force, and he said within himself: "Ah! that is it! I want to feel as that man looks. What is the use of money, that you have to trade your soul to get, compared with the open conscience and the gentle, sympathetic brotherliness that shine out from those calm eyes?"

But just then Zaccheus noticed that Christ seemed to be seeking some one specially, and he

looked about wondering who it could be, supposing he was looking for the chief rabbi, or some noted doctor of the law in the town—some man famous among the learned coterie of Jericho. Perhaps Zaccheus was a little envious, and as Christ was now drawing close to the tree, on a branch of which he sat, he longed that the Savior might at least cast one glance his way.

And then a wonderful thing happened. Zaccheus was never able to tell quite how it was. Suddenly the Master looked up into his face, and he found those gentle but heart-searching eyes shining to the very depths of his soul, hunting for the manhood that was still left, weighed down beneath all the bags of ill-gotten gold. Christ's lips opened, and the notes of the sweetest voice Zaccheus ever heard fell on his charmed ears, and the words—his heart was in his throat as he listened, they seemed too good to be true, and if he had not been the only Zaccheus in the town he would have believed a mistake had been made.

"Zaccheus," the Master said, "make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

Zaccheus had his faults, but sluggardliness was not one of them. Whatever he was, he

was not a slow man. One of the chief factors of his success had been that when he had a chance for a good bargain, he never let it lie and get dusty, or gave the other party time to change his mind. So Zaccheus made haste, and came down, and received the Lord joyfully.

Now, Mr. Moody says that right there occurred Zaccheus's conversion, "somewhere between the limb and the ground." Anyhow, Zaccheus had received a sufficient revelation of the heart of Christ to give him hope, and to put some element of joy into his soul. How proudly the little man led off toward his house! Little did he mind the mutterings of the crowd; but there were plenty of them. On every side the remark was made, and bitter looks went with the words: "He is gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." But that was just like Christ. Who ever knew Jesus Christ to go home with anybody else but a sinner, when there was a chance to do him good and to save his soul? We want to catch that spirit, and bend the whole energy of our lives, not first of all to please our neighbors, but to do them good.

It was the glory of Handel, the great musician, that he valued his work more because of its good influence than on account of the fame

it brought to him. It is related that when the "Messiah" was first brought out in London, the performance produced a deep impression. "Amen!" sounded through the vast arches of the church. "Amen!" responded Handel, as he slowly let the staff fall with which he had been beating time. When he left the church, a royal equipage stood in waiting, by the king's command, to convey him to the palace. George II, surrounded by his whole household and many nobles of the court, received the illustrious musician.

"Well, Master Handel," said the king, after a hearty welcome, "it must be owned you have made us a noble present in your 'Messiah.' It is a brave piece of work!"

"It is," said Handel, looking the monarch in the face, well pleased.

"It is, indeed!" said the king. "And now, tell me what I can do to express my thanks to you for it."

"Give a place to the young man who sang the tenor part so well," said Handel, "and I will ever be grateful to your majesty."

This young man was one whom Handel had befriended.

"Joseph shall have a place from this day in

our chapel as first tenor," said the king. "But have you nothing to ask for yourself? I would gladly show my gratitude to you, in your own person, for the fair entertainment you have provided us all in your 'Messiah.'"

The flush of indignation mantled Handel's cheek as he answered, in a disappointed tone: "Sire, I have endeavored, not to entertain you, but to make you better."

What a glorious answer was that, and what a noble spirit it revealed! The earthly monarch was not feared by Handel, because the musician lived in the conscious presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Christ, true to his mission, went home with Zaccheus to do him good. Indeed, he had been doing him good from the first moment he looked into his face; and as Zaccheus walked along with him toward his home, the Holy Spirit revealed to him that this was indeed the Messiah. And as soon as they got into the house, Zaccheus turned to the Lord, and said: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation [or, as the New Version has it, "If I have wrongfully exacted aught from any man"], I restore him fourfold." When you remember

that Zaccheus was a Jew, you won't have any trouble in believing that, whether Zaccheus was converted between the "limb and the ground" or not, he is certainly converted now. One of the characteristics of a Jew is not only his peculiar shrewdness in a bargain and in devising means to make money, but he has remarkable staying qualities in the art of keeping it.

A new novelist by the name of Isaac Zangwill, an English Jew, has suddenly sprung into fame in London, and will certainly become famous in this country also, because of the graphic way in which he depicts the character of his own people. In the book of short stories which has made him famous—"The Children of the Ghetto"—there is one very unique character called "The Rose of the Ghetto." Rose's father, who is a shrewd master-tailor, does not come forward, as he agreed to do, with the dowry of the bride, when the bridal party arrives at the synagogue. The bridegroom, upheld in his position by the marriage-broker, stood firm. Not until the dowry was paid in full would the bride be led under the canopy. The day went on. The situation became intolerable. Other couples went under the canopy, but not they. At last, Leibel, the bridegroom, wearied. The

long day's combat had told upon him. The report of the bride's distress had weakened him. Even Sugarman, the marriage-broker, had lost his proud assurance of victory. But he cheered on his man still: "One could always surrender at the last moment." Finally, through the gesticulating assembly swept that peculiar murmur of expectation which crowds know when the procession is coming at last. By some mysterious magnetism, all were aware that the bride herself—the poor hysteric bride—had left the paternal camp, and was coming in person to plead, it was supposed, with her mercenary lover.

At the sight of her, in her bridal robes, Leibel's heart melted. You see he was really in love with Rose. She laid her hand appealingly on his arm, while a heavenly light came into her face—the expression of a Joan of Arc animating her country.

"Do not give in, Leibel!" she said. "Do not have me! Do not let them persuade thee! By my life, thou must not! Go home!"

At the last moment the vanquished father produced the balance of the dower, and they lived happily ever afterwards.

Now, Zaccheus belonged to a race like that; and when he stands up before the Lord, and

with full heart exclaims, "Behold, one-half of my goods I give to the poor, and whatever I have exacted wrongfully I will make restitution in four times as much," we know that a new light has come into his life. His old standards of value are broken down. He has found something of infinitely more worth than money—a real, genuine conversion. From underneath the tax-collector, Christ has dug out the man.

Dr. Wayland Hoyt has unearthed a most interesting story over in Minneapolis. It is the story of a violin. Herman Schifferl, now a violin-maker in Minneapolis, learned his art in Munich; and afterward, in Paris, was employed by the most celebrated maker of violins in France. He became a courier for Englishmen, and achieved an excellent reputation among the English nobility. But after awhile he settled down in Pisa, Italy, at violin-making again. While he was there, Lord Salisbury, now the ex-prime minister of England, visited the city, and, being himself a splendid musician, he desired to buy a fine violin. There are so many imitations and frauds in violins that it is a hard thing to be sure of a good one. Young Schifferl was introduced to Lord Salisbury as one who, through his great knowledge of violins, could aid him.

After a long search a suitable one was found, and purchased for a large sum. When Lord Salisbury had purchased the violin he scratched on the outside of it with a penknife, "Salisbury, 1867." There the matter ended, so far as the young violin-maker was concerned, for twenty-seven years. Soon after this he removed to this country, and settled down in his business in Minneapolis. In 1875 he noticed in a New York paper that Lord Salisbury had had a violin stolen, and offered for it a great reward. It interested him for the time, but soon passed out of his mind. Only the other day, however, he chanced to take down, from the long row of violins brought into his place of business to be mended, one which, the moment it was in his hands, caused him to break forth in an exclamation of startled surprise; for he held in his grasp an instrument worth thousands of dollars, and the identical one which he had bought twenty-seven years ago for Lord Salisbury, in Pisa. The identification was complete. Not only the name of the maker was there; but, after rubbing off the dust and dirt, there was the scratching, "Salisbury, 1867," blurred by time, but clearly discernible.

So Jesus Christ, passing through Jericho,

seeking after lost men, found Zaccheus—a man covered by the dust and dirt of selfishness and sin, thought to be a common and worthless fellow, with little or none of the sweet music of humanity in him; but Jesus, the great expert in manhood, brushed off the dust and found, written deep and imperishably on his soul, the inscription which proved him to be the son of God. “And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he is also a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

XIV.

THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE SOUL.

“What doest thou here, Elijah?”—I KINGS XIX, 13.

THERE are four pictures in the Bible drawn from the life of Elijah, all of which are of striking interest. He comes before us first like a flash of lightning in the presence of the wicked, idolatrous king Ahab. We know nothing whatever of his boyhood or youth. The very first glimpse we get of him he is a full-grown man, bareheaded, barefooted, long hair falling over his shoulders, and dressed in sheepskins pinned about him by thorns from some desert bramble.

He is a man of tremendous strength, whose muscles have been turned into cords of steel by severe exposure and exertion in the desert. He stands suddenly before the wicked king who had built the temple of Baal, and had introduced the Egyptian ox-worship. Standing there alone, he proclaims himself as the unswerving servant of Jehovah, whom he is not ashamed to reverence as the God of Israel in opposition to all idols. Looking the king straight in the eye,

he declares: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall be no dew these years but according to my word." And then he is gone like a flash, leaving the king to wonder if he has not seen a ghost or had a bad dream.

The last one of these pictures is very different, but still more unique. Two men, Elijah and Elisha, are walking along the road beyond Jordan, when suddenly there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. The great French artist Gustave Doré, found one of his masterpieces in this scene. He has, with all the power of his genius, represented the sweeping clouds, the winged horses, the prophet with outstretched hand, and Elisha falling in amazement at the splendid spectacle. Thus it was that this heroic man disappeared from the earth. These pictures show the beginning and the end of his earthly career. It begins in self-sacrificing loyalty to God; it ends in deathless triumph.

Midway between these two pictures are two others, that stand in strong contrast with each other. One day we see him on Mount Carmel, facing the priests of Baal, bravely staking reputation, liberty, and life on his faith in God, and

we witness his complete and perfect triumph; but, to our astonishment, the next day reveals him fleeing away into the desert before the threatenings of the wicked Jezebel. He shrinks away into the darkness, hiding under a juniper-tree, praying that he might die, crying out in his despair: "It is enough now, O Lord; take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers."

There are some interesting features of this latter picture worthy of our study, as well as some practical applications of this question of the Almighty directed to Elijah, that it ought to be helpful for each of us to make personally to our own consciences.

One of the most interesting features of this case is the sudden cowardice of this so recently brave man. While Elijah was doing his duty he was afraid of nothing that could come against him; he risked everything on his faith in God. But when this sudden revulsion of doubt came over him in a time when his hands were idle, he ran before his enemy into the desert like any ordinary coward. It is faith that makes men truly brave and heroic.

While we have had many insane and diabolical deeds committed by anarchists, we have also had many contemptible exhibitions of cowardice

on the part of these would-be reformers who make a jest of faith in God and religion. I remember, a few years ago, when Herr Most was attracting a good deal of attention, and came into the public arena like an untamed human tiger. He raved and howled, and was in favor of bombs, dynamite, and Winchester rifles, and a general slaughter of all men who did not drink as much whisky and swear as vulgarly as he did. He was fierce and awful, like the fabled ass in the lion's skin. His crimes at last started the police after him, when he—armed heavily with rifle, pistol, and knife, when the policeman got near enough to be heard—threw away his armament, and, though big and fat and lazy, he crept under a bed, and lay there in terror until pulled out by the heels, with his eyes rolling in craven fright, shaking and perspiring and almost speechless. *Harper's Weekly* contained a picture of the scene at the time, entitled "The Anarchist Drill." In the picture a fierce and raving hero was giving the word of command which was: "Attention, Anarchists! Double quick! Under the bed! March!"

The fact is, that character is always necessary to true courage. Faith in God, reliance on his sympathy and love for men, and a firm assurance

of the everlasting life after death,—these are the roots of the highest courage.

Another interesting feature of this scene is God's treatment of Elijah. Notice the gentleness of it. There he lies under the desert-bush, tired, exhausted, disconsolate, despairing; asking God to let him die—the coward's thought always. Certainly he is to be blamed for fleeing from his duty, and yet it is a very human picture. Who of us have not seen the day when we could draw near him, and wrap our own head in his mantle? But God treats him just as a mother treats her child who is peevish because utterly tired out. God takes him in his arms and says: "You are tired, Elijah. You haven't eaten anything for two days, and been wrought up to the highest pitch all this time. Come, eat, and take a good long sleep, and tomorrow you will be better." And after the prophet had had rest and sleep and food, and a long walk in the desert to insure digestion, the Lord calmed his stormy mind by the healing influences of nature. He commanded the hurricane to sweep the skies, and the earthquake to shake the ground; he lighted up the heavens till they were all ablaze with the glory of the lightning. All this expressed Elijah's feelings.

His spirit rose with the spirit of the storm. Stern, wild defiance, strange joy—all by turns were imaged there. But as yet Elijah did not recognize God in this; "God was not in the wind, nor in the fire, nor in the earthquake." But after awhile came a calmer hour. He felt tender sensations in his bosom, his heart opened to gentler influences, until at last, out of the manifold voices of nature, there seemed to speak, not the stormy passions of man, but "the still small voice" of the harmony of the peace of God.

Frederick W. Robertson, the great Scotch preacher, says that "there are some spirits which must go through a discipline analogous to that sustained by Elijah. The storm-struggle must precede the still small voice. There are minds which are convulsed with doubt before they repose in faith. There are hearts which must be broken with disappointment before they can rise and hope. There are dispositions, like Job's, which must have all things taken from them before they can find all things in God. Blessed is the man who, when the tempest has spent its fury, recognizes his Father's voice in its undertone, and bares his head and bows his knee as Elijah did."

After God had compelled Elijah's recognition by his providence, he came to him, and said—what do you think he said? "You cowardly deserter? You ungrateful and rebellious wretch?" No; but this: "What doest thou here, Elijah?" And even this was in "a still small voice." It is thus God's gentleness makes men great. Now, this watchful, tender, but heart-searching question ought to come to each one of us to-night, as we examine seriously into the whereabouts of our souls.

Suppose we apply this question to our troubles. Elijah had gotten into trouble, and God asked him: "What doest thou here, Elijah?" So to any that are in trouble to-night, let the inquiry come. Let us ask ourselves the question: "How did we come into these difficulties? Did we come into them in the pathway of duty, or did we bring them upon ourselves by our own folly and sin?" If our troubles came upon us in doing duty, then our consciences are clear, and we are comforted with the certainty of God's care. And, indeed, such troubles only sweeten our lives, and make them more beautiful in every way.

Many people are like evening primroses. I remember being invited by a friend to come, one

evening at sunset, to watch the opening of a beautiful collection of evening primroses. They were common-looking, uncomely stocks, and the buds were tightly wrapped so long as the sun shone, and gave no promise of the coming beauty; but the moment the sun disappeared, and the gloom of the coming night was threatened in the darkening twilight, they suddenly blossomed in beauty and fragrance, and crowned the homely stocks with a golden glory. So there are many men and women whose lives are hard and selfish and common and homely, until their sun of prosperity sets, and the threatening gloom of sorrow overshadows them, when, under that touch of trouble, a hidden germ blossoms in beauty and sweetness of spirit that crowns the whole stock of their lives with goodness and glory.

But how many of life's troubles come in the wake of our own disobedience to God! Perhaps no parent ever has sorer trouble than over the wickedness of a wayward child; and it often happens that parents wonder that God should have dealt so with them, when the child is simply the fruit of their own careless course of conduct. The old fable is not without its lesson, even in the present enlightened age: "How very badly

my poor children are walking!" said a crab, in great distress of mind. "I scold and reason and talk, yet I notice nothing but crookedness." "Ah! my friend," said a listener, "if you so earnestly wished your children to walk straight, why have you always walked crookedly yourself?"

The power of example is stronger than any other human influence. Every one of us, who are the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, needs to lay this to heart. The hypocrites, who go into the Church with the purpose to commit sins under the garb of righteousness, I am convinced, are comparatively few. It is the carelessness of Church members, the thoughtless, heedless folly, that often make their influence and example a stumbling-block in the way of others. I think many could well pray the prayer of the court jester. Some poet tells that once, when

"The royal feast was done, the king
Sought some new sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried: 'Sir Fool,
Kneel down, and make for us a prayer!'

The Jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before.
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: 'O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

No pity, Lord, could change the heart
From red with wrong to white as wool:
The rod must heal the sin; but, Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

'T is not by guilt the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
'T is by our folly that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how gladly it had rung?

Our faults no tenderness should ask;
The chastening stripe must cleanse them all;
But for our blunders—O, in shame,
Before the eyes of Heaven, we fall.

Earth bears no balsams for mistakes:
Men crown the knave, and scourge the too.
That does their will; but thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The king, and sought his gardens cool;
And walked apart, and murmured low,
'Be merciful to me, a fool!"

Apply this question to your doubts, to your lack of ready acceptance of God's appeal to your soul. Why are you here in doubt of God's Word—you who were reared in a land full of evidence of the divine influence of the Bible on every hand? You, to whom the precious name of Jesus was a cradle-song, what doest thou here? Ask if it is not your own fault.

Almost any one can throw away any helpful and ennobling faith by treasuring up and nursing the doubts that the devil suggests to the mind. But why should you nurse them up any more than you would pet and coddle a thief who came to rob you? A noted Frenchman—Amiel—who died a few years ago, left a private journal, which has been published and quite widely read. It is very sad reading, indeed. His life is the history of others, repeated over and over again. His doubts first led him to reject the gospel; then, divine providence was denied; and, finally, a personal God and the immortality of the soul were cast overboard, to make his craft float more sprightly. But he sailed into the harbor of death with his own soul lost.

Among his last words were these: "Specter of my own conscience, ghost of my own tor-

ment, image of the ceaseless struggle of the soul which has not yet found its true aliment, its peace, its faith,—art thou not the typical example of a life which feeds upon itself, because it has not found its God, and which, in its wandering flights across the worlds, carries within it, like a comet, an inextinguishable flame of desire, and the agony of incurable disillusion?"

If there be any here who lack enjoyment and interest in religion, you ought to put this question earnestly to yourself. You excuse yourself, it may be, by saying: "I have no desire, no longing in that direction." Now, if that is true, God comes to you as solemnly as he came to Elijah at the mouth of the old desert cave, and says: "What doest thou here, without a zest for spiritual things?" God made you to find your highest possible delights in spiritual friendship and communion. Both your body and mind were given as adjuncts to your soul. Why is it that you have no spiritual appetite?

I once read a pathetic story of a lady of one of our Northern cities, who possessed rare refinement and great wealth, but had lost her health. In this sad condition she was advised by her physician to visit one of the tropical

islands, in search of that which was of more value to her than all earthly possessions. After she had lived there for some time, she wrote back to her friends, saying: "This is a most lovely place. The climate is perfect, friends are very attentive to me, and the finest food and tropical fruits are furnished at my command; but if I only had an appetite!" She had the offer of all that heart could wish, but lacked an appetite, and died in a few months. If she could only have relished her food, she would have lived.

All about us are men and women who are spiritually starving to death—more pitiable cases of starvation than pauper in attic ever saw—not a starved body, but a famished soul. The spiritual appetite has been frittered away. Everything else has been fed. The body, the dear, tender body, that shall be fed itself to worms in a few years, has been nursed and coddled, and kept fat and sleek; but the soul, that can never die, has been left to go hungry, or to feed on the morbid vaporings of the world. You can not afford to throw away your appetite for spiritual things. If you have been doing so, I pray you cease now. Cultivate, by God's grace, the desire for those things that ally you

to the royal line of character and destiny both on earth and in heaven.

How wise it would be if some who hear me to-night would apply this question to the associations which you are forming! How often men say to me, when I plead with them to become Christians: "I could not live a Christian life surrounded by the associations which are about me!" What doest thou here in such associations? Honestly and frankly, though it may seem almost rude—let my earnestness to save your soul be my excuse—what business have you to make such associations? No man can afford to be careless about the associations he makes or the habits he forms.

There is a wonderful tree in the southwestern tropics called the man-eating tree. It grows in the South Pacific islands; but the name is a slander. Its reputation has been supplied by strange stories, which have been circulated; yet, as in the case of most evil rumors, some truth has started the gossip. The tree has long branches. From these it throws out tendrils that reach to the ground. The tendrils twine around any object they touch. Then, after a time, contract, holding in their clasp whatsoever they have clutched, and suspend their prey in

the air. Of course, men and animals are not thus clutched; for it takes days and weeks to do the grasping. But bones and sticks are lifted up, and held in mid-air; hence the murderous name. Youth is like that wonderful tree. The mind has its beautiful branches, its noble faculties, and each branch throws out its long tendrils, grasping after objects, and twining around habits and associations. After awhile they contract, and these habits and associations are suspended before the eyes of men and God. Many a man in later life has said, over and over again, in the language of the poet, "Had I but known," I would have lived so differently in my youth.

"Had I but known that nothing is undone
From rising until rising of the sun,
That full-fledged words fly off beyond our reach,
That not a deed brought forth to life dies ever,—
I would have measured out and weighed my speech;
To bear good deeds had been my sole endeavor,
Had I but known!

Had I but known how swiftly speed away
The living hours that make the living day;
That 'tis above delay's so dangerous slough
Is hung the luring wisp-light of to-morrow,—
I would have seized Time's evanescent Now;
I would be spared this unavailing sorrow,
Had I but known!

Had I but known to dread the dreadful fire
That lay in ambush at my heart's desire,
Where from it sprang and smote my naked hand,
And left a mark forever to remain,
I would not bear the fire's ignoble brand;
I would have weighed the pleasure with the pain,
Had I but known!

Had I but known we never could repeat
Life's springtime freshness or its summer's heat,
Nor gather second harvests from life's field,
Nor aged winter change to youthful spring,—
To me life's flowers their honey all would yield;
I would not feel one wasted moment's sting,
Had I but known?"

It is that unavailing sorrow I would save
you, if I could. If to-night your heart is not
right with God, I pray you, here and now, open
your heart, that the Savior may come in, and
drive out everything that is impure and unclean.

XV.

A HEAVENLY STAIRWAY.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature."—I PETER I, 4.

THE message of the opening verses of this chapter is that, in sin, man walks upon a low plane, treading in the filth and corruption "that is in the world through lust;" but that God through his great love in Jesus Christ has prepared a way of escape, a divine stairway, whereby, through certain great promises made by reason of the atonement of Jesus Christ, a sinner may climb out from the low marshes of mire and clay up on to the high table-lands of virtue and knowledge and faith and patience and brotherly kindness and love. In that lofty altitude we breathe the atmosphere of heaven, and are partakers of the divine nature.

Let us study for a little time some of the rounds in this ladder, or some of the stones in this stairway, by which one may climb into fellowship and association with God; and I think we will all agree that the first stone in that stair-

way is the great promise of freedom from the bondage of sin. Paul surely thought so; for when writing to Timothy, giving for his benefit some of his own reminiscences, he begins by saying: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Sin is aptly described in the Scriptures as a slavery. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, declares that we are to escape from the bitter bondage of sin by becoming the free disciples and servants of Jesus Christ. "Know ye not," says he, "that to whom ye yield yourselves as servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" And then, again congratulating them on their escape, he says: "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

There is no such thing as absolute freedom among intelligent beings. The only way that we can escape from the low bondage of the flesh is by rising up into the lofty service of the spirit. Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, says: "He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman; likewise, also, he that is called being free, is Christ's servant." We have

had a great deal of talk in our time about free thinking and free living. A certain skeptical writer said, awhile ago, that when she got rid of Christianity she felt she emerged on "the broad, breezy common of nature." But the people who escape from fields and fenced pastures and towns and cities, and emerge to live on the "breezy commons," are never the people who advance civilization. Who are the people who defy the limitation of fences and houses for the open common? Are they not the untaught, superstitious Indians, the wandering Gypsies, and the idle tramps? The best things do not grow on the "breezy commons." Crab-apples grow there, now and then some wild grapes, and wild gooseberries; but what are these compared to the corn-fields, the meadows, and the rich gardens of civilization?

Surely the history of the last few hundred years shows us that the people who try to escape the limitations of Christianity, and live on "breezy commons," find license instead of freedom, and sour wild-fruit in place of the rich orchards of the gospel. But there is a noble proclamation of liberty in the gospel of Christ: "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Christ proposes to make

us free from the bondage of sin, not by dragging us out of it by some force greater than our own while we long to stay in the enjoyment of its vulgarity, but by cleansing our hearts from their foul taint, and arousing within us a love for better things.

When a great steamer strikes on a sunken rock at the mouth of the harbor at low tide, it would be worse than useless to drag her off the rock, doing the ship perhaps irreparable damage; but, instead, the captain waits, hoping that when high tide comes she may be lifted high enough to float of her own accord into the deep waters of safety.

So it would be idle even for Omnipotence to undertake to drag a human soul, against its own love and desire, off of the shoals of sin where it has grounded. But if the God who brings in the tide by a magnetic influence exerted by the heavens can also bring to bear upon the poor sinning soul the magnetism of divine love, the wrecked human bark may be brought to sail again. A ship that is aground can not sail unless it be lifted up, and there is no hope for a soul aground unless it, too, be lifted up. The psalmist says: "I will run in the way of thy commandments, when thou hast enlarged my

heart." If I speak to any here to-night who feel that they are aground, and that the soul cleaves to the mud, allow me to point you to Him who came to rescue souls in just such danger; not by any temporary expedient, but by bringing them out of the dominion of sin under the reign of righteousness and truth.

The soul that, by repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, turns toward the new life, puts off "the old man with his deeds," and becomes a partaker of the divine nature, so that the things that once were loved, now are hated, and those that once were hated and dreaded are now admired and loved. Upon every side of us are witnesses of the power of Jesus Christ to work this transformation. Under this heavenly influence, drunkards become sober, lustful natures are made pure, liars come to love the truth, dishonest men become reliable, misers melt into generosity, selfish men blossom into self-denying deeds, men given to anger and revenge grow to be tender and gentle as a child.

In the light of all this testimony, shall we not obey the injunction of Paul in his letter to the Hebrews? "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which

doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Again we enter into the divine nature through the great promises that are made to us concerning the reliability of our Christian faith. All earthly supports for our faith are as changeable as the winds. They are like the yielding sand. Jesus says himself that those who trust in worldly supports are like the foolish man who built his house upon the sand, which, when the great stress of the storm came, was overthrown and destroyed. But the Christian he likens to the wise man, which built his house upon a rock; "and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock."

How splendidly Christ illustrated these great promises in his own experience in temptation! It could not have been called temptation truthfully, unless in some great sense he was tempted. It was a strain in some way upon his moral nature; and yet in the wilderness, from the mountain top, and from the pinnacle of the temple, as

well as in his daily contact with the people, under the severest strain of temptation, how strong and noble his life shone out! He was tempted in all points like as we are, "yet without sin." Under every possible strain he lived a genuine, reliable life. This was possible, we must all agree, because of the divine nature which was in him. And so, if we, too, shall become partakers of the divine nature, we also shall be trustworthy under temptation. We shall still be tempted, and shall feel the strain of it, but the buoyancy of the divine nature shall sustain us.

One of the editors of the New York *Independent* recently had a strong article entitled "The Strain of Brooklyn Bridge," in which he remarks, if you walk across Brooklyn bridge you will notice that in the middle the four great cables hang so low that you can touch them. A full-grown man can put his arms around one of the great cables so that his fingers will meet about it. It is made of thousands of steel wires twisted in strands and cords and ropes, all gathered in one cable of prodigious strength. On these four cables rest with ease the two carriage-ways, the two railways, and the wide walk for passengers. All these hang dependent from these four cables so firmly that one seems to be

walking on solid earth ; for so firm, so solid is the structure, and so mightily is it held by these four steel cables, that there is no sense of weakness, no swaying of the great bridge by the fiercest winds, or by anything that passes over it.

As you stand in the exact middle of the bridge, you will observe where the compensation is made for the expansion and contraction by heat and cold. The bridge, resting on the four cables, is divided into two parts in the middle, and one end is arranged to slide over the other. You can put your hand on the railing, and measure, by the rubbing of the parts, how far they have pulled back in winter or have overlapped in summer. And, indeed, the bridge shows this same sensitiveness to the heat of every day.

But not only does the bridge feel heat and cold ; it is also sensitive to the weights that pass over it. If you stand and watch, you will notice that foot-passengers seem to have no effect on it. Even when a heavily-loaded team passes by, there is no observable movement ; the bridge does not seem to have noticed it at all. But if you watch when a train of cars is crossing the bridge, you will see the ends of the two parts of the bridge begin to move apart and separate for about an inch ; then, as the train passes on, they

come together again, and in a moment they are in their normal position. The bridge will notice that the train is passing; but it did not break, neither did it feel any painful strain.

It is surely a great illustration for our study. There are bridges that would be broken under the weight of a single traveler, and so there are men who fall under the pressure of a single temptation. But there are firm, assured Christians, whose great cables hold so fast at one end to the divine command, and at the other to the divine promise, that no temptation can break them down—men and women who belong to that class described by the apostle, who can not sin because they are born of God and abide in him. Let no one think it is impossible for him to reach this reliability of character. God has made no one to be a spiritual weakling, incapable of lofty moral development. If we are true to the light he gives us, and open our hearts to receive him, he will abide in us and we in him. Our weakness will be supported by his strength, we shall partake of his reliability of nature, and we shall come to know what Paul meant when he said, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

We enter also into the divine nature through

the great promises which are given to us of the witness of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, testifying to God's love and forgiveness. How blessed are some of these promises! We are assured that God is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him than earthly parents are to give good gifts unto their children. When God dwells in the heart, it can not but be that that heart shall be bright and full of cheer; for "God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all." If he dwells in the heart, love and good-will must prevail; for "God is love." The blues must be dissipated, morbid depression of spirits be overcome, and the soul attuned to song and praise, if the witness of God's Spirit bears cheerful and glad assurance of our sonship to God. The presence of God in the heart is like the presence of the sunshine on the earth.

A distinguished scientific writer, Professor Percy Frankland, has an article in a recent number of the *Nineteenth Century*, in which he calls attention in an interesting way to the modern scientific discovery of the cleansing and disinfectant properties of sunshine. The common notion that the rays of the sun promote the multiplication of bacteria, and consequently fermentation, putrefaction, and decomposition, is, it ap-

pears, incorrect. About sixteen years ago two Englishmen, by the names of Downs and Blunt, established the fact that if certain liquids capable of undergoing putrefaction are exposed to the direct rays of the sun, they remain perfectly sweet, while exactly similar liquids kept in the dark become tainted and exhibit innumerable bacteria under the microscope.

It has been further ascertained that not only does sunshine check the growth of these minute organisms, but that it has the same effect upon the microbes which are hostile to human life. The bacilli of Asiatic cholera, for instance, are killed after a few hours' exposure to sunlight, and other deadly organisms which are not destroyed by exposure to the solar rays are so profoundly modified in character that the most important changes are noticed in their subsequent behavior.

What a splendid analogy there is between the facts revealed in this scientific discovery and the phenomena of the Holy Spirit in his action upon a human soul! Solomon declared that a merry heart doeth good like a medicine; and there is no heart so truly merry, nor so permanently so, as the one that is at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul and

Silas, bruised and bloody, thrown into the dungeon, sing songs of praise and triumph at midnight. Cheerfulness and the atmosphere of hope and love, such as the genuine Christian enjoys, do more than anything else to prevent the fermentations and putrefactions of the inner life. Even Stephen's enemies had to admit that his face was like that of an angel, and Moses, though he wist not that his face shone at all, when he came down from his fellowship with God, dazzled the eyes of the Hebrews to behold him beyond their power to endure.

The Holy Spirit has not lost its power to transform the human countenance. It can take out of it the record of fretfulness and peevishness, and jealousy and hate, and write on it the new name of gentleness and love. And what a benediction there is in a face full of the divine cheer! May God give such a face to every one of us by bringing us into the constant abiding fellowship with himself!

And then we are brought to be partakers of the divine nature through the great promise of partnership with Christ in the world's salvation. Paul's heart bounds within him when he exclaims: "We are workers together with God." And one of the most comforting things Christ

could have said to the sad and lonely disciples was: "Ye are my witnesses." And in his last great command to them he assured them of this blessed fellowship in the work of saving the lost when he said: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

There is no way by which we can enter into perfect fellowship with Christ so well as by doing the work of love which he has upon his hands and heart among men. And when we remember how great is his love for us, how much he suffered in our behalf, how little seems what we have done for him, and how slight our own evidence of devotion in seeking after the lost.

Dr. Dio Lewis, in his autobiography, tells a pathetic little story of a shepherd dog which came under his observation during his travels in the West. It was out on a frontier ranch, and the owner was showing him a shepherd dog which he said he would not sell for five hundred dollars. She had at that time four young puppies, and while Dr. Lewis and the rancher were admiring the little mother and her babies, one of the herders came in to say that there were more than twenty sheep missing.

Two dogs, both larger than the little mother, were standing about, but the herder said neither Tom nor Dick would find them. Flora must go. It was urged by the herder that her foot was sore, that she had been hard at work all day, was nearly worn out, and must give her puppies their supper, but the master insisted that she must go.

The sun was setting, and there was no time to lose. Flora was called and told to hunt for the lost sheep. While the master pointed to the great forest through the edge of which they had just passed, she raised her head, but seemed very loath to leave her babies. The master called sharply to her. She looked tired and low-spirited, but patiently and faithfully trotted off toward the forest.

"That is too bad," said Dr. Lewis.

"O, she'll be right back," was the master's answer.

The next morning he went over to learn whether Flora had found the strays; but she had been out all night, and had not yet come in; but while they were speaking the sheep returned, driven by the little dog, who was so worn and tired with her night's work that she could scarcely wag her tail and give one love-kiss to

her master's hand before she dropped down asleep beside her babies.

Ah! if a dog can do that out of devotion to her master, what ought not you and I to do for Jesus Christ and his lost brothers and sisters? Think of it—the vast gloomy forest, the little creature with the sore foot, and heart crying for her babies, limping and creeping about in the rugged cañon, all through the long dark hours, finding and gathering in the lost sheep!

I repeat it, if a dog could do that, strengthened by the little flickering flame of love which it could understand, what can we do, cheered and sustained by the Holy Spirit, nerved by yoke fellowship with Jesus Christ, and lured onward by hopes of everlasting glory? Rather what can we not do, to bring back the lost to the feet of our loving Master?

XVI.

A CONSECRATED PERSONALITY.

“And he went up and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.”—2 KINGS IV, 34.

THIS scene is the climax of a very graphic and interesting story, which most of you recall. A woman known as the Shunammite—a woman of wealth and position—who had been very kind to the prophet, and in whose house he had spent many a restful hour, had come to him in great distress. Her only child, a boy, had been smitten with sunstroke while out in the fields with his father’s harvesters. They had brought him to the house to his mother, and after moaning a few hours in her arms he died.

In her great sorrow she took him up into the prophet’s chamber, and laying him on the bed which she had with her own hands prepared for her guest as the man of God, she mounted her beast, and hurried away to find Elisha. She found the prophet at Mount Carmel, a spot forever made sacred by the triumph of Elijah over

the prophets of Baal, and surely a place to inspire confidence in the power of God to do wondrous things. As soon as her story was told to Elisha, he said to Gehazi: "Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child." But the mother of the child refused to be put off with Gehazi, and said: "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." Which was a very persistent way of letting Elisha know that no one would answer in his stead, and so he arose and followed her.

As they went, Gehazi, who had gone on ahead of them, came, meeting them, and declared that he had laid the staff upon the face of the child without any effect. So Elisha went up to the room himself, and, after earnest prayer, he proceeded, as it is related in the text, to bring the dead child in personal contact with his own warm and living body.

The picture is so strong and suggestive that there can be no doubt that it is meant to teach us an important lesson.

For some reason, we know not what, Elisha proposed to bring this child back to life by

proxy. His servant and his staff he gladly sent at the call of his friend; but God refused to recognize either the servant or the staff, and did not make them the channel of communication by which life might be imparted to the dead boy; and the prophet himself was compelled to bring the whole power of his own personality to bear. We have here a very vivid illustration of the power of a consecrated personality.

I do not for a moment discount in any way the miraculous element of the story; but, after all, it was only because Elisha was such a man as he was that it was possible for God to work through him in bringing life to the dead. Just as a magnet is the center of great attractive forces with which it is charged, so Elisha was charged, if I may so speak, with spiritual force. Once, when the crowd thronged about Jesus Christ, and a poor woman, who had had an issue of blood for twelve years, pressed through the crowd behind him, and touched the hem of his garment, Jesus said that he perceived that virtue had gone out of him. Now what was possible in the case of Jesus and of Elisha must, in some great sense, be true of all of us, or may be true of all of us. It is very significant that in the days of the prophets, as well as in the days of the

Son of man, works of helpfulness were almost universally wrought through the medium of personal contact. Christ took his spittle and mixed it with clay, and put his fingers on the poor blind man's eyes. Peter, at the Beautiful Gate, took the lame beggar by the hand and lifted him up. When a young man, who had fallen asleep under Paul's long sermon, fell out of the window, and was picked up dead, Paul took him in his arms and restored him. And so Elisha must stretch his warm-blooded, vigorous body over that of the death-stricken child, and mouth to mouth and eye to eye and pulse to pulse, giving self for self, he becomes the channel of life from God.

Surely here is a lesson for us in all our attempts to bring men spiritual life. When Paul was smitten with blindness on his way to Damascus by that wonderful vision which was the beginning of his conversion, while he yet groped in darkness and knew not which way to go, they led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus; and when the good man Ananias, obeying the leadings of the Spirit, entered the house where he was, he put his hands on him, and thus brought to him his sight.

Nothing can take the place of this hand-to-hand contact. There is a legend of an English

monk, who died at the monastery of Arenberg, where he had copied and illuminated many books, hoping to be rewarded in heaven. Long after his death his tomb was opened, and nothing could be seen of his remains but the right hand, with which he had done his pious work, and which had been marvelously preserved from decay. S. T. Wallace makes the legend the basis of a poem entitled "The Blessed Hand," in which he says:

"They laid him where a window's blaze
 Flashed o'er the graven stone,
And seemed to touch his simple name
 With pencil like his own;
And there he slept, and one by one,
 His brothers died the while,
And trooping years went by, and trod
 His name from off the aisle.

And lifting up the pavement then,
 An abbot's couch to spread,
They let the jeweled sunlight in
 Where once lay Anselm's head.
No crumbling bone was there, no trace
 Of human dust that told;
But, all alone, a warm right hand
 Lay fresh upon the mold.

It was not stiff, as dead men's are,
 But with a tender clasp
It seemed to hold an unseen hand
 Within its living grasp;

And ere the trembling monks could turn
To hide their dazzled eyes,
It rose as with the sound of wings
Right up into the skies.

O loving, open hands that give!
Soft hands the tear that dry!
O patient hands that toil to bless!
How can ye ever die?
Ten thousand vows from yearning hearts
To heaven's own gates shall soar,
And bear you up, as Anselm's hand
Those unseen angels bore."

We have suggested in our study this morning that no gift of our possessions, however generous, can take the place of the consecration of ourselves. Paul, in one of his letters to the Corinthians, says, about the Christians of Macedonia, that they first "gave their own selves to the Lord;" and he makes the supreme value of such a gift very clear in the famous thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, when he declares that, though he should bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned, and had not love, which is the very essence of self-giving, it would profit him nothing. The richest gift we can give to God, or to our brothers, is ourselves.

Many a Grand Army man, who was a prisoner in North Carolina during the Rebellion, remembers an old Negro woman who was known by the

name of "Cheer up, honeys," and "Glory-day," both among the Union prisoners and the Confederate conscripts. The saintly old soul had nothing to give them but the sympathy and good cheer of her own heart; but that happened to be what they lacked more than anything else; and every day, when prisoners were marched into the stockade, or conscripts were halted within her reach, she would hobble up to the wornout and discouraged men, and with sunshiny face and moist eyes, she would cry in the ears of all: "Cheer up, honeys, glory-day is coming!" which was often like a cup of cold water in a dry and thirsty desert. How many prisoners of sorrow and trouble are all about us!—how many conscripts of fortune drafted into a hateful service, who need, more than anything else, the cheer of kindly personal sympathy and fellowship! God called the rich farmer a fool who tried to feed his soul on what he stored away in his barns; and do we not deserve the same opprobrium who try to make anything merely material to take the place of the giving of our own selves in personal contact and helpfulness in doing the work to which the Master calls us?

Dr. S. C. Logan tells, in the *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, how, one blustering night

when it was very dark and the wind was howling, he was awakened in the middle of the night by a warm little hand which was gently pressed upon his face. He reached out in the darkness and found his little boy. He was standing by the bed, and trying to lay his head beside his father's on the pillow. The father said:

"My dear boy, what is the matter?"

He answered in a whisper, "Nothing, papa."

"But what do you want?"

"I want you," he answered, with a little sob that shook his body, and very soon shook the father's. But with the father's kind arm about him he soon grew quiet, and again was asked: "My child, are you sick?"

"No," he said.

"Are you hungry? Don't you want something?"

"No," he said, with his lips pressed to the father's ear, "I just want you; it is so dark."

Brothers, there are many, many of God's children who are wandering in the dark, knowing not which way to turn, the wind of adversity howling about them, the darkness full of ghosts to their excited and frightened imagination, the blackness of the midnight driving to despair, who need above everything else that somebody

who knows God, and is therefore not afraid, whose heart is warmed by the love of Jesus Christ, shall give themselves as a refuge, a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.

I fear that many of us are like Elisha, willing enough to send the servant to lay the dead stick upon the dead body, but hesitating at the only gift which can really bring life to the dead, the gift of ourselves. Great things can only be accomplished by great consecration. When Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, and found his disciples mortified and defeated, and the poor father who had come to them with his sick child, hoping against hope for his restoration from the demons that possessed him, Jesus, after the child had gone away recovered with his parent, said to the disciples, who asked why they could not cast him out: "This kind goeth not out save by fasting and prayer." That is, by the giving up of self.

No man can fast by substitute, and no man can pray by substitute; and the two together represent more perfectly than anything else supreme consecration.

Dr. J. R. Miller has recently retold a beautiful legend of Japan, about the making of a wonder-

ful bell. The substance of the story is, that long ago the emperor wrote to the maker of bells, and commanded him to cast a bell larger and more beautiful than any ever made before. It was to be made of gold and silver and brass, that the tones might be so sweet and clear that, when hung in the palace tower, its sound might be heard for a hundred miles. The maker of bells put the gold and silver and brass into his great melting-pot; but the metals would not mingle, and the bell was a failure. Again and again he tried, but in vain. Then the emperor was angry, and sent word that if the bell was not made at the next trial the bell-maker must die.

The bell-maker had a lovely daughter. She was greatly distressed for her father. Wrapping her mantle about her, she went by night to the oracle, and asked how she could save him. He told her that gold and brass would not mingle until the blood of a virgin was mixed with them in their fusion. Again the old maker of bells prepared to cast the bell. The daughter stood by, and, at the moment of casting, she threw herself into the midst of the molten metal. The bell was made, and was found to be more wonderful and perfect than any other ever made. It

hangs in the great palace tower, and its sweet tones are heard for a hundred miles. The blood of sacrifice, mingling with the gold and silver and brass, gave to the bell its matchless sweetness.

The old heathen legend has in it a vein of eternal truth. The great metals of human life can only be fused in blood. Great deeds can not be wrought second-hand, can not be wrought by substitutes, can not be accomplished without the giving up of the entire self. How many times the Church stumbles and staggers and fails, in its attempt to carry forward its ministry of reconciliation, because those who are charged with sacred responsibilities, instead of possessing and exhibiting the dauntless courage and the holy self-giving of Jesus Christ, appear only as those who act a part in mouthing ceremonies or in directing shrewd and cunning worldly policies!

Dean Hole, of Rochester, England, in a volume entitled "Memories," tells an amusing anecdote of the old *régime*, when cannons were sometimes removed from their places on board of a man-of-war for the sake of accommodation. They were replaced by short wooden dummies, which looked externally like the real thing, and

occupied much less room. A naval officer, who had taken offense at something which had been said at a dinner-party by a clergyman who had just been made an honorary canon, and who was somewhat autocratic, resolved to be avenged. He invited the whole party to inspect his ship next day, and when inquiry was made as to the use of one of these sham substitutes, which he had placed in a conspicuous position to attract notice, he replied, in a tone which all could hear: "O, that wooden thing? It is only a dummy—a sort of honorary cannon!"

Alas! I fear that many a spiritual man-of-war goes into battle with so many honorary cannons as to be almost helpless in trying to do real execution. If one could imagine the gun having human thought and emotion, what could be more contemptible than to be a poor wooden dummy, in the midst of the enginery of real life and execution, for defense or aggressive conflict on every side? But how much more contemptible to be a dummy in the great conflict which Jesus Christ is waging for the salvation of this world!

Vital issues are on every side of us. Living, burning problems, that go down to the very marrow of human being, are demanding solu-

tion; and, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we must believe and know that only as men come to love him, and are mastered by his Spirit, can there be real peace and harmony for mankind. And in the midst of such a conflict, when everything that is wicked and lustful and drunken and greedy and devilish is seeking to bring distrust on Christianity and overthrow its beneficent work—to be a dummy in a fight like that, to count for nothing, to be only a painted wooden thing, taking up room where others fight and bleed and suffer and are glorified,—ah! it seems to me, that is unbearable. But there is only one way to escape it, and that is to throw your whole self into the struggle.

The Jews who wagged their heads at Jesus Christ as he hung upon the cross, and sneeringly said, "He saved others, but himself he can not save," spoke more truth than they dreamed. One can not be a savior of others, and at the same time be careful of himself.

In Ireland, recently, a quarrel had taken place at a fair, and a culprit was being sentenced for manslaughter. The doctor, however, had given evidence to show that the victim's skull was abnormally thin. The prisoner, on being asked if he had anything to say for himself, re-

plied: "No, your honor; but faith, and I would like to ask, was that a dacent skull to go to a fair with?"

A man is of no value in doing any great work in this world who does not so throw himself into it with enthusiasm and devotion that hard knocks shall not daunt him, but rather inspire him to do his best. As Dr. George Pentecost once said: "If any one would live earnestly, he must stand the racket."

One of the last official acts of President Carnot, of France, was bestowed on an American girl, over in Ohio, to whom he gave the cross of the Legion of Honor. She is perhaps the youngest person in the world who wears that cross. It came about in this way: Last summer, Jennie Clark, an eleven-year-old girl, was walking along a railroad track over which was soon to pass a World's Fair excursion-train. She saw that the trestle-work over a deep ravine was on fire. As quick as a flash the little girl snatched off her red petticoat, and ran swiftly up the track toward the coming train. As it approached, she waved the danger-signal, and it was heeded. Among the hundreds of lives that were saved were a number of Frenchmen, at whose instigation President Carnot bestowed

the cross of the Legion of Honor. The heroic act of the little girl had in it all the elements of heroism—she gave herself. Until we give that, all else counts but little.

Bishop Simpson, in his Yale Lectures on Preaching, told of an exhibition he once attended, the most marvelous, he said, in all his life. There was a young man who, when schools for imbeciles began to be opened in Europe, moved with benevolence, and possessing wealth and leisure, went to Europe to study the methods, and finding they were feasible, he came back to open a like institution on our shores.

He advertised for the most imbecile child that he could possibly get, and the worst one that came was a little fellow, five years old, who never had stood or taken a step or chewed a hard substance, had no power of movement, could only lie a helpless mass of flesh on the floor; and that was the child whom this man was to cure somehow, and whose latent ability he was somehow to bring forth.

He tried in every way he could think of, but did not succeed. At last he determined to have the boy brought up at noon, a half-hour every day, and laid on the carpet in his room, and he would lie down beside him, to see if, by any

means, he could stir any sort of suggestion in the helpless lump of flesh. Ah! that was more than Elisha did; for it was day after day, over and over again. In order that he might not waste his time, and that he might do something, he was accustomed to read aloud from some author, as he lay by the side of this helpless child.

It went on in this way for six months, and there was no sign of recognition until one day, utterly wearied, he intermitted reading, and he noticed that there was a strange restlessness in this little mass of humanity, and at once he put himself in connection with it, and there was a trembling movement of the hand, and he put his head down toward the little hand; and at last, after great effort, the little helpless fellow did manage to lay his finger tremblingly on his lips, as though he said: "I miss that noise; please make it." And then he knew he had control of the boy, and by manipulations of his muscles carefully he taught him to walk.

Five years after that, Bishop Simpson said he saw him stand on a platform, and repeat the names of the Presidents of the United States, and answer accurately many questions concerning our national history. "And," said the bishop,

“was there ever such condescension?” And then he thought again within himself: “There was one other such condescension, when he who was God himself lowered himself to my capacity in the Incarnation, and lay down beside me, and helped me, when I was blinded and smitten and made imbecile by sin, and waited twenty years, until, at last, I put my fingers on his lips, and said, ‘Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.’” Ah! well may we sing:

“When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down:
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

XVII.

IN THE APPLE ORCHARD.*

“As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”—SONG OF SOLOMON II, 3.

I HAVE been tenting in an apple orchard this summer, and can not expect to get away from it all at once, and so must bring you my first message from summer meditations from under the shade of orchard boughs during the long, dreamy summer days. I have experienced what Celia Thaxter once wrote about:

“Buttercups nodded, and said ‘good-bye;’
Clover and daisy went off together;
But the fragrant water-lilies lie
Yet moored in the golden August weather.
The swallows chatter about their flight,
The cricket chirps like a rare good fellow;
The asters twinkle in clusters bright,
While the corn grows ripe and the apples mellow.”

August is a time when nature seems almost to stand still and take a little breathing spell before the rarely beautiful but destructive work of autumn begins. To use again the picture of the

*First sermon after vacation.

poet, we find it beautifully portrayed by Annie Libby's poetic pencil:

"The cornstalk tassels on the ridge
Are bronzing in the sun;
The elderberries by the bridge,
And all along the run,

Grow purple through the golden days;
Barberries by the wall
Glow crimson in the silver haze
That ushers in the fall.

Old Ocean dreams, in slumbers deep,
Of wintry storms to come;
In far-off mountain caverns sleep
The winds; the brooks are dumb.

The partridge, in lone country lanes,
Whirs low a speckled wing;
Silence through all the woodland reigns,
The birds forget to sing.

From yellow cornfields slowly pass
The crows, with clanging cry;
All day upon the orchard grass
Ripe apples fall. A sigh

Escapes the earth at thought of death,
For summer's life so brief,
And, fluttering on that sigh's faint breath,
Falls down the first red leaf."

Perhaps if I give you a single other poetic picture, we will be able to settle down to a more serious study of our apple-tree lesson:

"Yonder, between two mountains vast,
The bright shield of the lake is cast.

O splendor of the far, deep sky,
Of mountains soaring low and high,
Of lake that flashes at its feet,
Of ferns and mosses cool and sweet;
O beauty, brooding everywhere,
The essence of the earth and air!

I lie amid the goldenrod,
I love to see it lean and nod;
I love to feel the grassy sod
Whose kindly breast will hold me last,
Whose patient arms will hold me fast—
Fold me from sunshine and from song,
Fold me from sorrow and from wrong;
Through gleaming gates of goldenrod
I'll pass into the rest of God."

What a delightful thing it is that the Bible is so fresh and delightful in its illustrations! The grass is never greener than on its pages; the lilies never so beautiful as when the Master uses them to adorn his sermon. The cedar-trees are never so fragrant as when we breathe their aroma through the Psalms of David. Every season is mirrored in the Bible, and so the apple-tree comes to us as a study peculiarly fitting to this time of the year.

My meditation has run on this wise: In what respect does an apple-tree fairly represent a human life? And here are some of the reasons that appeal to me:

First, the apple-tree fairly represents the aver-

age, every-day capabilities of mankind. The apple-tree is not a genius like the cherry or the peach or the orange, but it is infinitely more useful in the long run. If all the people in the country were going to vote on what orchard fruit-tree should be kept, if all but one were to be destroyed, I think the apple-tree would be elected without doubt by an overwhelming majority. So the great mass of men and women are not geniuses; they have just ordinary capabilities.

I think that sometimes a good deal of harm is done to young people by unwise appeals to a certain kind of ambition. Young men especially have been so often exhorted to cultivate self-reliance, and to aim at high destiny, and in this country so much has been said about Washington with his surveyor's chain, Franklin setting type, Grant in the tannery, Lincoln splitting rails, and Garfield on the tow-path, that it would not be astonishing if now and then a young man's head became turned, even as the poor English boy whom Dr. Morley Punshon tells about, who tried to commit suicide, and left a little note giving as his reason that he was made "by God to be a man, but doomed by man to be a grocer." Nothing is more perilous to all practical success than wild, unreal air-castle building.

The fact is, that nine-tenths of all of us will continue in the line of life we are, or something very much like it, until the end of the chapter. That is nothing to be discouraged about. The world's civilization depends not upon some erratic genius here and there, however great his power may be for good, but upon the great multitude of honest, straightforward men and women, who bear their average of apple fruitage for the feeding of this hungry world.

Phillips Brooks, in a great sermon on "The Man with One Talent," declares that "it seems very certain that the world is to grow better and richer in the future, however it has been in the past, not by the magnificent achievements of the highly-gifted few, but by the patient faithfulness of the one-talented many. If we could draw back the curtains of the millennium and look in, we should see, not a Hercules here and there standing on the world-wasting monsters he had killed, but a world full of men, each with an arm of moderate muscle, but each triumphant over his own little piece of the obstinacy of earth or the ferocity of the brutes. It seems as if the heroes have done almost all for the world that they can do, and not much more can come till

common men awake and take their common tasks."

Down in the southwestern tropics, and here and there in rare gardens throughout the world, you may find a century-plant. It is a moderate-sized shrub ordinarily, but when the flowering-time draws near it will, within a few weeks, send up a stalk thirty feet high, and shoot forth more than a score of branches, and clothe itself with a robe of golden flowers. While they last it is marvelously lovely, and will attract attention from all within reach. But after a few weeks its blossoms will wither and drop off, and for a hundred years again it will sink into insignificance.

What a lonely world for flowers it would be if it were the only plant that yielded blossoms! The humble geraniums and roses and heliotropes are of far more worth than these century wonders. So there is no cause for discouragement or disappointment because you feel that special genius has not been given you. The world is not to be lifted out of its diseased and sinful conditions into the sweet and fragrant atmosphere of moral and spiritual health by century-plants, however glorious they may be, but rather by the sweet fragrance of apple-blossoms blooming on

all the orchards of the earth. How richly Mrs. Browning re-enforces our thought:

“Great deeds are trumpeted, loud bells are rung,
And men turn round to see;
The high peaks echo to the pæans sung
O'er some great victory;
And yet great deeds are few. The mightiest men
Find opportunities but now and then.

Shall one sit idle through long days of peace,
Waiting for walls to scale?
Or lie in port until some golden fleece
Lures him to face the gale?
There's work enough, why idly then delay?
His work counts most who labors every day.

A torrent sweeps adown the mountain's brow
With foam and flash and roar;
Anon its strength is spent,—where is it now?
Its one short day is o'er.
But the clear stream that through the meadow flows,
All the long summer on its mission goes.

Better the steady flow; the torrent's dash
Soon leaves its rent track dry;
The light we love is not the lightning flash
From out a midnight sky,
But the sweet sunshine, whose unfailing ray
From its calm throne of blue lights every day.

The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,
Whose deeds, both great and small,
Are close-knit strands of an unbroken thread,
Where love ennobles all.
The world may sound no trumpets, ring no bells;
The Book of Life the shining record tells.”

The apple-tree is a good illustration of human life in this, that it can not bear fruit successfully without a great deal of pruning. A certain farmer raises the most luscious apples, and is famous among orchardists. His fruit is bigger and better than that of any of his neighbors. On being asked how he got rid of windfalls and dwarfs, his reply was couched in the single word, "Pinching." It seems in the spring, when he finds branches putting on airs, he pinches off some of the blossoms and whispers to the balance, "Now you go off about your business, or you will get pinched, too;" and the result is that the balance of the blossoms get themselves into noble apples as soon as ever they can. In addition to this pinching of the blossoms, he often goes through his orchard in July with a big pair of shears, and lops off branches that are loafing, and nips shoots that are distracting the growing fruit by diverting the juices that should make for apples, into useless wood. An apple-tree set out in the rich soil, and allowed to have its own way without being pruned or trimmed, will soon go to ruin.

I saw some orchards like that this summer, that had been left unpruned for two or three years, until what the farmers call "water-sprouts"

had grown up from the trunk and off from the branches, until not only is all the beauty of the trees destroyed, but they bear no fruit. How often we see people the same way!—full of the water-sprouts of selfishness, utterly spoiled and fruitless for the lack of the pruning-knife of self-denial. Christ never uttered anything more true than this: "The disciple is not above his Master." If we are going to bear spiritual fruit like Jesus Christ, then we must be willing to suffer with him.

Again, the apple-tree is like the growing human life, in that it needs to have a higher life grafted into it. Bishop D. W. Clark relates that once a noted horticulturist took him into his nursery. It was a fine sight,—thousands of trees standing in long rows, and comprising all the richest varieties of delicious fruit. Whatever science and skill and carefulness could contribute to its perfection was secured. The bishop said to the nurseryman: "I suppose you are very careful in the selection of your seeds and kernels to get only the rarest quality of fruit."

"O no," he replied; "we plant whatever comes to hand, and then we bud them. Every one of those trees was budded."

This is an interesting fact in horticulture.

When a gardener wishes to raise a rare and splendid fruit, he takes a bud or sprout from a bearing tree and grafts it. No matter how poor a variety the tree or stalk may be upon which he grafts it, the bud will preserve its own identity, and when it grows up will bear its own fruit. Thus a tree is often made to bear fruit entirely different from and very superior to that which its own nature would have produced.

So we are taught that God has in this world a system of spiritual horticulture. Though you have been a sinner against God, and have produced only the sour fruits of selfishness, if you will open your heart to him, he will come in, and engraft into your character the uncorruptible seed of the Word of God, no matter how unpromising the variety of the individual. Jesus Christ came down from heaven "to seek and to save that which was lost," and if you will allow his influence in your heart, his own divine life will take root, and grow up in your nature, preserving its own identity; will blossom in unfading beauty, send forth heavenly odors, and ripen into immortal fruit. Are there not some who need to learn this deep, fundamental lesson of the apple-orchard?

This comparison between the apple-tree and

the human life may be continued further, in the enemies that threaten each. As a worm at the heart kills the apple-tree, so does sin in the human heart destroy the beauty and fruitfulness of the life. How many of these ugly and vicious bugs there are! One is bad company. A writer about apple-orchards says that one day he saw a nurseryman on a step-ladder in the branches of a Baldwin tree in July. Knowing that Baldwins are not picked until October, he asked him if he was n't crazy, gathering his apples so early. "These apples," the nurseryman said, "that I am taking off are stunted, and never will amount to anything. I have to cleanse my trees, lest the good fruit be spoiled by bad company. These wormy and sickly apples take as much from the tree as the other, sound apples; but you see they do n't appropriate it as well."

There is nothing that young people—and old people, too, for that matter—need to be more careful about than their associations. It is never wise or safe to stow yourself away with rotten apples. You can not do so except as a missionary, going with a purpose to help and save, and hope to escape the taint yourself.

Another one of these dangerous insects—and indeed one of the worst, because he is an edu-

cated worm—may be put under the head of bad papers and bad books. One day a gentleman in India went into his library, and took down a book from the shelf. As he did so, he felt a slight pain in his finger, like the prick of a pin. He thought that a pin had been stuck by some careless person in the cover of the book. But soon his finger began to swell, then his arm, and then his whole body, and in a few days he died. It was not a pin in the book, but a small and deadly serpent.

One can not but shudder at the thought of the serpents among the books of our own time. Many of them nestle in the foliage of our most fascinating literature, and coil around the flowers whose perfume intoxicates the senses. Many people read and are charmed by the plot of a story, by the skill with which the characters are sculptured, or by the gorgeousness of the word-painting, and hardly feel the pin-prick of evil that is insinuated. But the deadly poison gets into the blood nevertheless. If we could write a true epitaph to put on the gravestones above multitudes of wrecked and ruined lives, it would be: "Poisoned by serpents among the books!"

The only real safety is to cultivate a taste for good books. The really well-fed man is never

tempted to go hunting in the back yard that he may eat the filth from his neighbor's swill-tubs; and so the man or woman whose mind is properly nourished has no disposition to go nosing about into the slop-barrels of the news-stands in search of diseased and poisonous provender.

Finally, the apple-tree, like a human life, is judged by its fruit. Nothing can take the place of that, and no one is set in circumstances so barren but that, by fidelity and devotion, he may bear fruit pleasant to the taste of his fellows and delightful to the heart of God.

Mrs. Celia Thaxter, whose little poem I quoted at the opening of this sermon, and who has, during the last few days, gone home, is an apt illustration of how the graces of the Spirit can clothe a life with beauty and charm. She lived on the Isle of Shoals, on the New England coast. By her skillful hands she turned the barren land into "An Island Garden," and her home became a bower of beauty and flowers. But many who were never permitted to share her graceful hospitality have been blessed by her writings. Her last book gives a charming picture of her life at Appledore. "As I work," she says, "among my flowers, I find myself talking to them, reasoning and remonstrating with them, and adoring them,

as if they were human beings. Much laughter I provoke among my friends by so doing, but that is of no consequence. We are on such good terms, my flowers and I. Altogether lovely are they out of doors; but I plant and tend them always with the thought of the joy they will be in the house also."

As a writer she was fresh and vigorous, and both her poetry and prose were rich in sweetness and light. She has touched the deeper springs of experience in many of her poems, and these have nerved the sad and despondent to a loftier courage, as I am sure you will feel in this one, with which I close:

"Because I hold it sinful to despond,
And will not let the bitterness of life
Blind me with burning tears, but look beyond
Its tumults and its strife;

Because I lift my head above the mist,
Where the sun shines and the broad breezes blow,
By every ray and every raindrop kissed
That God's love doth bestow,—

Think you I find no bitterness at all—
No burden to be borne, like Christian's pack?
Think you there are no ready tears to fall,
Because I keep them back?

Why should I hug life's ills with cold reserve,
To curse myself and all who love me? Nay!
A thousand times more good than I deserve
God gives me every day.

And in each one of these rebellious tears,
Kept bravely back, he makes a rainbow shine.
Grateful, I take his slightest gift. No fears
Nor any doubts are mine.

Dark skies must clear; and, when the clouds are past,
One golden day redeems a weary year.
Patient I listen, sure that sweet at last
Will sound his voice of cheer.

Then vex me not with chiding! Let me be!
I must be glad and grateful to the end.
I grudge you not your cold and darkness. Me
The powers of light befriend."

XVIII.

THE KING'S SIGNET-RING.

“That day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and I will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts.”—HAGGAI II, 23.

“As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee hence.”—JEREMIAH XXII, 24.

IT is hardly possible for us, in these modern days, to comprehend the importance attached to seals and signet-rings in the days when it was a rare thing for a king to know how to write his name. In the olden days no document was regarded as authentic unless it was attested by a signet or seal. Sometimes these stones were pierced through their length, and hung by a string or chain from the arm or neck; but the most common way was to have a man's sign—which stood for himself everywhere it was found on a document—set in a ring for his finger. As an impression from the signet-ring of the monarch gave the force of a royal decree to any instrument to which it was affixed, so the delivery or transfer of it to any one gave the power of

using the royal name; and thus the king was bound by their actions, and it was the highest possible honor that could be given to any subject.

A little reflection shows us how splendid is this illustration of God's confidence in and love for those who trust him; for Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, in that far-away time, was no dearer to the heart of God than John, the son of James, is, in Brooklyn, in our own day. What dearer thing could God say to his child than he said here, in this first Scripture: "I will make thee as the signet-ring on my finger?" The more we study it, the greater will be the treasure we find in it.

The signet-ring was a precious ornament, greatly delighted in by the owner, and always worn. So God hath chosen us to be the ornament of his person in this world; and afterwards, after we are received into heaven, we will be counted up among his jewels, if we are faithful to him. What a high and honorable position! How strange that any one having such a call should regret the perishing pleasures of sin!

Two or three years ago, when Captain Murrell, of the steamship *Missouri*, found the Danish steamer *Denmark*, with her seven hundred pas-

sengers, lying helpless in mid-ocean, he was obliged to come to some decision as to what he would do in the case. His cargo filled his vessel, and he was under obligations to carry it across the Atlantic; but, on the other hand, hundreds of human beings were in danger, and in a little while must sink in the engulfing waves. He had to choose between landing the cargo and saving the men and women and children—between steering straight for the port or turning aside to the Azores, where he could land the imperiled passengers.

He did not take long to decide. He took the responsibility, and overboard went the bales of rags, to make room for living men and women and children. He had his reward in the love and affection of the rescued, in the approval of his employers, in the praise of millions of all lands, and finally in the honor of knighthood in the kingdom of Denmark. He sacrificed rags that he might save lives, and thus won honor and fame and reputation that few men would achieve in a lifetime of ambitious toil.

Are there not multitudes to-day in this Church, and in many another Church, who are as busily employed as the captain of the *Missouri*—people who have their own work to do,

their voyage all planned, their cargo on board, their course marked out? But souls are perishing, men and women capable of becoming signet-rings of Almighty God are suffering and dying. Shall we excuse ourselves in such an emergency? Shall we cling to our own personal ease or purpose, while souls for whom Christ died are struggling hopelessly in the waves about us? What advantage can there be in the possession of the proudest success, in business or professional life or society, that we can fondly dream of, if along with it there shall be haunting memories of duties undone, of opportunities neglected—of immortal brilliants for the Savior's crown, who might have been rescued, but who have sunk in the darkness? O, my Christian brother or sister, throw overboard the rags, and let the earthly cargo perish if it has to, but do not miss an opportunity to bring home souls in safety into the heavenly port.

There is indicated here the safety of those who with gladness yield themselves up to this honorable station, as the signet-rings of the heavenly King. Nothing is so safe as the signet. You must break through all the defenses, and overcome the king himself, in order to get that.

Think of all the defenses that protect the king. There are the troops that guard the outer gates of his palace; then, if you were to overcome them and get inside, there are still other guards at the door; and when you get close to his own room, there is the private body-guard; and then, when you get into his presence, the signet is worn on his finger, and for it he will fight as if for his life.

Apply all this to God in his relation to his children, and how full of comfort it is! All these shining worlds that decorate the sky to-night, they are at the beck and call of him who wears you on his signet-finger. Does he not say we are as the apple of his eye? Does not Paul say, if while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, shall he not now, since we have given our hearts to him, freely give us all things?

This illustration suggests the noble work to which God calls us. The signet was used to make covenants with. Its impression bound the king. So in the salvation of men and women, God uses us to win them from the evil mastery of sin, and to make covenant with them for a new and heavenly life. In every one of these men and women we are meeting daily,

there is enough of divine nobility left to make covenant with heaven. As some poet sings:

“The huge, rough stones from out the mire,
Unightly and unfair,
Have veins of purest metal hid
Beneath the surface there.

Few rocks so bare but to their heights
Some tiny moss-plant clings,
And round the peaks so desolate
The sea-bird sits and sings.

Believe, me, too, that rugged souls
Beneath their rudeness hide
Much that is beautiful and good,—
We’ve all our angel side.

In all there is an inner depth,
A far off secret way,
Where, through the windows of the soul,
God sends his smiling ray.”

In the chapel of the woman’s prison at Sherbourne, Mass., there is a striking picture of Christ standing before the woman taken in adultery. The light beaming from his face, the pose of his figure, the outstretched hands, seem to utter a benediction of hope over the prostrate woman. Beneath it is written, “Go and sin no more.” One evening, when the women were dismissed after prayers, one remained in her seat. She was one of the worst to manage of all the prisoners. The matron, supposing some

new trouble was brewing, went and asked what was the matter. The woman, with her eyes fixed on the picture, said: "I want to go into the solitary cell." "Why," said the matron, "what do you mean? You have just had to spend a week there!" "I want," said the woman, "to go and be alone, where I can think about Him that is in that picture."

She went into solitary confinement, remained a week, and came out to serve the rest of her sentence with a deportment that called for no criticism, and after leaving the prison lived an upright life. If the painter of that picture could get on canvas an expression of Christ with such power, can not we, who are the personal signet-rings of God, get the same power into our lives and faces?

Ah! what ability in all the world is there so splendid as that—the power to inspire faith in those who are disheartened and discouraged and defeated, who no longer believe in the reality of a holy life; the ability to awake in them again, not only a belief in the possibility of goodness, but to hope for it in themselves, as the most splendid gift God can bestow on mortals?

I am convinced more and more that what we need above everything else is the God living in

us, so that we, in our own day and time, are God manifest in the flesh to those whom we seek to win. To win men's souls from the grip of passion and sin, requires, on our part, hearts hot with love and sympathy. It is a work that can not be done in a cold, conventional sort of spirit. You must love the work, the fire of your enthusiasm for it must drive you, master you, so that you must save souls or die. All great work requires that kind of earnestness, the putting of one's very self into it.

Before beginning a new story, Charles Dickens was in the habit of spending weeks, and sometimes months, in the vicinity where the scene was laid, studying every detail of character, place, and surroundings. His writings proved the care he took in the study of men. His immortal works were his reward.

Audubon, the ornithologist, was equally painstaking and self-sacrificing. He counted his physical comforts as nothing compared with success in his work. He would rise at midnight, night after night, and go out into the swamps to study the habits of certain night-hawks. He would crouch motionless for hours in the dark and fog, feeling himself well rewarded if, after weeks of waiting, he secured one additional fact about a

single bird. During one summer he went, day after day, to the bayous near New Orleans to observe a very shy waterfowl. He would have to stand almost up to his neck in the nearly stagnant water, scarcely breathing, while countless poisonous moccasin-snakes swam sometimes within a few inches past his face, and great alligators passed and repassed his silent watch. "It was not pleasant," he said, as his face glowed with enthusiasm; "but what of that? I have the picture of the bird."

He would do that for the picture of a bird! What are you doing to seek out immortal souls and bring them home to heaven? O, we must have heart-blood in this work!

They tell us that in Scotland there is a battle-field on which the natives of the soil and the Saxons once met in terrible conflict. All over that old battle-field grows the beautiful Scotch heather, except in one spot. There a little blue flower grows abundantly. No flowers like them are to be found for many a league around. Why are they there? The reason given is this: Just in the spot where they grow, the bodies of the slain were buried, and the earth was saturated with the blood of the victims. The seeds of these flowers were there before; but as soon as

the blood touched them they sprang up, and every blue flower on Culloden's field, as it bends to the mountain breeze, is a memorial of the brave warriors who dyed the heathery sod with their crimson gore.

Brother, sister, let us learn the lesson from the old Scotch battle-field. There are seeds of noble and holy deeds lying dormant in the minds and hearts of people we meet every day. They only need that our warm heart's blood shall touch them to make them leap into being. Shall we dare to be lethargic or sluggish when every common day may hold possibilities like that?

There was a young man whom we will call Theodore—for it is a true story—who had been reared in a Christian home. He had early accepted Christ as his Savior, and had entered the Church. When he was about sixteen or seventeen, he went away from home to enter college. At the boarding-house where he was to stay, there were several other young men, most of whom were older than himself. Only two of these were Christians. As the company gathered about the tea-table on the first day of the term, the landlady said:

“Master Theodore, will you return thanks?”

Theodore blushed. He was a timid boy, and

he was conscious that every eye was upon him. But he bent his head, and tremblingly returned thanks to God.

That night he could not sleep. "I'm in for it!" he said to himself. "I'll be called on every meal this term, and blush and stammer as I did to-night. I'm almost sure that brainy Howard was disgusted. And yet it surely wouldn't be the manly thing to refuse. A Christian who won't stand by his colors is n't half a Christian. No; if she keeps on asking me, I'll do it every time." The landlady did keep on asking, and at length Theodore overcame his embarrassment, and performed the service with no thought of those who sat about.

About the middle of the term, to his utter surprise, Howard, who had been regarded as either careless or skeptical, confessed Christ, and joined the Church. "Do you want to know what set me thinking seriously upon the subject of religion?" asked Howard of Theodore. "I'll tell you: The first night you were here, you were called on to give thanks. I could see it was an awfully hard thing for you to do, and that it cost you a desperate struggle. I said to myself that the religion that would give a shy little fellow like you pluck enough for a thing of that kind

was worth having. I have been watching you ever since, Theodore, and even when you did n't know it at all, you've been influencing me. Under God, I owe my conversion to you."

The sequel of this story is also worth telling. Howard is now a very earnest and successful preacher of the gospel. Theodore is a wealthy business man, who gives his thousands of dollars every year to the cause of Christ, and they both owe the grand success they have had to the blood-earnestness of that shy little boy who stood loyal to Christ in the hour of his trial.

But there is another possibility that we must not overlook. You must have noticed at the beginning the vivid contrast of the two texts we are studying. How strangely they stand over against each other! Of one man, God says, "I will make thee as a signet;" and of the other, "Though you were the signet on my right hand, yet would I pluck thee hence." There are two things that stand out very strongly in the story of Coniah. The first is, that a pious ancestry will not save a man. Coniah was in the royal line of David. The blood of some of the noblest and truest men of Israel ran in his veins; but the wickedness of his heart rendered all this of no avail, and the divine judgment about him is that

he shall be plucked off from the finger of God, and hurled in contempt to the earth. And surely the dark story of Coniah fully fulfills the sad prophecy. After only three months' reign on the throne of his fathers, he was captured and carried away to Babylon a prisoner, and there for thirty-six long years he was kept in a miserable dungeon on miserable fare. From a throne to a dungeon; from the prospect of ambitious success to a lifetime hidden away with the loathsome mold and bats and horrible conditions of ancient prisons!

This suggests to us the final thought, that ruin is certain unless sin is forsaken. We must choose between peace and heaven and our sins. God help you to do that to-night!

The story is told of a young man who came to an old minister and said to him: "I wish you would pray with me; I seem to have lost my acceptance with God." The dear old man said: "I will. Suppose we kneel down here, and pray together." And the old saint prayed most fervently for the young man. After they arose from their knees, he said: "Are you indulging, my dear brother, in anything which your conscience tells you is wrong?" The young man quickly answered: "I am sure it is not wrong; O no!"

"Well," said the old minister, "suppose we pray again." And again he prayed most earnestly for his young brother, and then at last he turned and said: "I am sure there is something in your way. You must give up anything and everything that you have a doubt about its being right." The great drops of agony stood on the brow of the young man as he exclaimed: "I can not give it up; it will kill me." The aged saint said solemnly and tenderly: "It is not much to die, but it is dreadful to do wrong." In a few moments, after a sharp struggle, the young man said, "It's done!" and the very light of heaven seemed to be shining in his face.

If I speak to any one to-night who is in the midst of such a temptation, and you feel you are drifting away from your close fellowship with God, I beg of you that you break with sin here and now. Cast it away forever. Do not longer risk that awful hour when God shall say to thee: "Though thou art the signet-ring on my finger, I will pluck thee hence."

XIX.

THE ANGEL FACE.

‘ And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly upon him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.’—
ACTS VI, 15.

THE biography of Stephen is condensed into a very few words in the New Testament record, but he has occupied a very large place in the thought of Christian people because of his pure, brave life, and heroic death. If a man's life is intensely good, a very little counts for a great deal; and all that we know about Stephen is of that dynamic kind that paints him large before our thought and our admiration.

He was the first of the martyrs, because he was the first to leap into the fray. His ardor was on fire. His love for Christ was pure and noble, and no opposition could daunt him for an hour. He never dallied with the question as to whether he would do his duty or not. He seized hold of the first opportunity to preach in clear notes the message of his Master. The end came quickly, and seemed to be disastrous enough. How distinct the figure of that strong, clear-cut, brave

young man stands out against the background of hatred, meanness, passion, cruelty, and selfishness of that wild, maddened mob that surged about him, and finally seized upon him in the street, and dragged him into the council, where their lying witnesses, which they had bribed to bear testimony against him, gave their false witness before the council! The contrast between this pure, young disciple of Christ, and the angry throng that sought his condemnation, was so great as to attract the attention even of the prejudiced throng that crowded the council-room; for "all that sat in the council looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

Canon Knox-Little says, with graphic force, that a face is the dial-plate of the soul. It takes the lights and shadows of varying feelings, hopes, and fears, and by expression records for others the inner variation of the movements of the soul. Who has not noticed the effect upon himself of a face in a strange crowd? Our eyes rested but for a moment upon the features of one who happened at that time to be in rapturous joy or overwhelming sorrow, and we seemed at the instant to look through an open window into a human heart so like our own that we compre-

hended at a glance all the joy or sorrow behind it. Jesus Christ had a face like that—a face which if a man saw he could never forget. When they came into the garden of Gethsemane, how startled and overwhelmed they were at a single glance of his face !

Christ looked once full in the face of a wicked woman of the town, and she was drawn away from her sin, and heavenly love was awakened in her heart to live forever. Christ only looked at Peter in the dawn of that morning of agony and bitterness, when the treacherous lie he had just told made him shrink and shiver over the fire, and it melted him to penitence, and aroused in him a courage which never faltered again. How beautifully Mrs. Merrill Gates sings about the power of the face of Christ :

“Once, at my very side,
Shone there a Face,
Full of unfathomed love,
Full of all grace.

There glanced my father’s look,
Speaking to me ;
Beamed there my brother’s brow,
Noble and free.

Peaceful and innocent ;
Pure, like my child ;
Deep, as my husband’s heart,—
On me it smiled.

In it there gleamed a light—
Ah! what a glow!—
Of my dear, friendly loves,
All that I know.

From it a radiance streamed—
Sunlight sublime!
There gathered holy looks,
Those of all time.

Aspects of sainted souls—
Felt I their tears—
Full of all heavenliness,
Martyrs and seers,—

Mighty, angelic power,
Seraphic grace,
Mingled their mellow fires
In that One Face!

Opened eternity;
Then, at a word,
Knew I the Face of Him—
Jesus, my Lord!"

The face of young Stephen had the reflected glow of that one great Face on it, as he sat there before the council. And as the gloom gathered that day in the darkening night, there was one sun-bright spot, brighter than any electric-light of modern times—it was the face of Stephen. Sitting there among his judges was a young man of about his own age, perhaps. He was an educated, bright fellow; a keen, thoughtful young lawyer, just coming out from the best law-office

in the town. But he was hot in his prejudices; an ardent, zealous, fiery soul; and, withal, exceedingly religious as he understood it. But as he gazed that evening on the face of Stephen, it made an impression on him that he could never get over; and at last, many years afterward, Paul the apostle—transformed, even in his name, from Saul the lawyer, by conversion and regeneration—remembered that glorious face, and saw in it the possibility for such a glorious transformation to come to every man who gives himself up to be a whole-souled disciple of Jesus Christ; and, writing to the Corinthians, he declares: "We all, with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory."

Now, if this is one of the possibilities of humanity, aided by that Divine favor and love which are in the reach of every one of us, it certainly behooves us to ask with all earnestness concerning the characteristics of the angel face. Fortunately, something has been made known to us in God's Word concerning it. From the descriptions that are given us of angels, we know that it is an illumined face, and that light is one of its chief features. The angel that guarded the tomb of the Lord Christ had a face

like lightning; and we are told distinctly that God "maketh his angels spirits, his messengers a flame of fire, as the sun shining in its strength." To have the angel face, then, is to have a face on fire, lighted from heaven. These human bodies of ours, made out of clay, would seem to be very poor mediums for spiritual light; but that it is gloriously possible for the Lord to reveal himself through them can be proved by testimony from every age of the world's history, and more certainly in our own time than any other.

We are told that when Moses came down from the mountain, having been for many days in fellowship with God, at first his face shone with such lustrous glory that the people could not look on him. And how suggestively it is added that Moses wist not that his face shone! It was the inner glory from his heart, on fire with fellowship with God's great purpose—the reflected glory of God, with whom he had communed.

The story is told of a Negro slave, in the old slavery days, whose mistress said to her: "When I heard you singing on the house-top, I thought you fanatical; but when I saw your beaming face, I could not help feeling how different that was from me!" The colored woman replied:

"Ah! missus, the light you saw in my face was not from me—it all came 'flected from de cross; and there is heaps more for every poor sinner who will come near enough to catch de rays."

It is recorded of Mr. Pennyfeather, of London, who was famous everywhere for the cheer and beauty of his Christian character, that he was once standing on the street, in the presence of a number of gentlemen, when a beggar approached, and, turning to him, said: "You, Mr. Gloryface, will surely give me something;" while on another occasion a little child ran home to his parents so happy, as she said, and when asked the reason, answered that she had met Mr. Pennyfeather, and, though he had not spoken a word, he had beamed on her.

The soul-lit face is not beyond our reach now. If we are able to take the hard, stony coal out of the earth, and, touching it with fire, transfigure its whole appearance, make it glow to the very heart with beauty and usefulness, we surely ought not to wonder that God is able to take his children—his sons and daughters, made in his own likeness, upon whom he hath lavished all the great bounty of his loving heart—and cause them to glow in heavenly likeness to himself, and make them burning and shining lights,

witnessing to his presence in the earth, and his willingness to accept and bless and honor his children.

Another characteristic of angelic character and beauty is, that their faces are full of restful peace—the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. God is able to give his followers the same kind of peace to-day. It would not have been astonishing if Stephen had had an anxious look on his face, as he looked around and saw only human sharks on every side of him, finding in every face an enemy that thirsted for his blood, with no one to pity him or say one single word of sympathy or good cheer; but Isaiah's declaration is true, when he cries out in ecstasy to God: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." Stephen proved it true in his time, and even his enemies witnessed that his face was full of angelic confidence.

God treats his saints that way yet. When Dr. Edward Beecher was more than eighty-five years old, he lost one of his legs in an accident. He was not conscious during the amputation. After he recovered consciousness, his heroic Christian wife took the task of informing him of the loss of the limb.

"I want you, my dear," said she, "to prepare yourself to hear something that will trouble you."

"What is it?" said he. "Anything about any of the family?"

"No," replied his wife; "you are the only one now that we are anxious about." Then she told him what the surgeons had been compelled to do.

He closed his eyes in silence for a moment, and then opened them and smiled, and said: "It is all right."

"Yes," said she, "it is not so very bad, after all; not as if you were a young man. Remember that you have had the use of both legs now for more than eighty-five years, and you could have had them but a very few years more anyhow."

When Dr. Meredith called, as soon as he could after the accident, and said to him, "The Lord had not forgotten you, or lost sight of you, at the time of your accident—he was still watching you," he replied: "I am sure of it. I never felt him nearer to me in all my life than I did just then."

What could any man have worth so much to him as an angelic peace like that?

There is one other characteristic of the angel face, and that is, it is a strong face. Angels ex-

cel in strength. It is said of the old Round-head soldiers of Cromwell's time that they were never afraid of the result of the battle when Cromwell had on his fighting face. A face that is the outgrowth of supreme confidence in God, enthusiastic devotion to Jesus Christ, and brotherly sympathy and love for one's fellow-men, can not help being a strong face, that will comfort and refresh those that look upon it. How much we need the strong, angel face among those who work for righteousness in our own day!

A compositor at a printing-office was setting in type this verse of Scripture, "And Daniel had an excellent spirit in him;" but he made it read: "And Daniel had an excellent spine in him!" Mr. Spurgeon said it was not much of a mistake. And I assure you that all good men nowadays need "an excellent spine"—strong souls, which write strong characteristics on noble faces. Such men, like Daniel, can look a lion out of countenance yet, and go to bed with more composure than luxurious kings, though danger lies down to sleep with them.

We have already indicated a little how the angel face is produced, but it is worthy that we should study it still more clearly and definitely.

It can never be produced except on condition of an angel's personal purity. Stephen was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Out of that kind of a garden of the heart the angelic face is grown in our time. As the brightly-colored soil formed by the breaking up of the great lava-waves that roll down the sides of a volcano produces flowers of the brightest tint, so there is a garden of heavenly coloring in the face of a pure man or woman which is glorified by the outshining of a heart on fire with devotion to God.

In one of the old churches in Italy there is painted a great picture of Christ and his twelve disciples at the Last Supper. An ignorant verger, explaining the picture, said: "Him as ain't got no glory is Judas." No nimbus crowned one head. The old painter said that no glory light emanated from the impure soul. And as we, battling against sin and the lusts that tempt us, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, overmaster the flesh, the result is seen in a lightened and happy face.

The angel face is also, in part, a result of their working together with Jesus Christ in service. They serve him, and see his face. In that hour of agony, when the mob was gnash-

ing on him, Stephen looked up, and said: "I see Jesus." Angels are ministering spirits. When our hearts and hands are full of ministration, our faces will be glorified by the divine ministry in which we are engaged.

It is said that a parishioner of Dr. Archibald Alexander once came to him for consolation, saying that he found no relief in the discharge of his religious duties.

"Do you pray?" inquired the Doctor.

"Yes," he responded; "I spend whole nights in prayer."

"How do you pray?"

"I pray," he answered, "that the Lord would lift the light of his countenance upon me, and grant me peace."

The Doctor responded: "Go and pray God to glorify his name, and convert sinners to himself." The troubled man followed the suggestion, and soon came to a joyous experience.

The angels in heaven ring all the joy-bells of the glory-world, and are full of rejoicing over "one sinner that repenteth." When we have caught their spirit, our faces will shine "with the solar light." Lucy Larcom sings it well:

"Hand in hand with the angels,
Through the world we go;

Brighter eyes are on us
Than we blind ones know;
Tenderer voices cheer us
Than we deaf will own;
Never, walking heavenward,
Can we walk alone.

Hand in hand with the angels,
In the busy street,
By the winter hearth-fires,
Everywhere, we meet,
Though unfledged and songless,
Birds of Paradise;
Heaven looks at us daily
Out of human eyes.

Hand in hand with the angels,
Oft in menial guise,
By the same straight pathway
Prince and beggar rise.
If we drop the fingers,
Toil-embrowned and worn,
Then one link with heaven
From our life is torn.

Hand in hand with the angels,
Some are fallen, alas!
Soiled wings trail pollution
Over all they pass.
Lift them into sunshine,
Bid them seek the sky;
Weaker is your soaring,
When they cease to fly.

Hand in hand with the angels,
Some are out of sight,
Leading us, unknowing,
Into paths of light.

Some dear hands are loosened
From our earthly clasp,
Soul in soul to hold us
With a firmer grasp.

Hand in hand with the angels,
'T is a twisted chain,
Winding heavenward, earthward,
Linking joy and pain.
There's a mournful jarring,
There's a clank of doubt,
If a heart grows heavy,
Or a hand's left out.

Hand in hand with the angels,
Walking every day;
How the chain may lengthen,
None of us can say;
But we know it reaches
From earth's lowliest one,
To the shining seraph,
Throned beyond the sun.

Hand in hand with the angels,
Blessed so to be;
Helped are all the helpers;
Giving light, they see.
He who aids another,
Strengthens more than one;
Sinking earth he grapples
To the Great White Throne."

Finally the angel face is the result of perfect obedience, and if we shall have the perfectly obedient heart, God will give us the angel face. Nobody pays so quickly or so splendidly as God.

Some one says a single honest stroke of work done for God gets an immediate repayment from the divine Paymaster himself.

The story is told of a teacher in a ragged school in Philadelphia, who had been working hard for many years, and had had no visible fruit. He was saying to a friend in the street one day, "I will give it up," when a little ragged boy pulled his coat, and urged him to go and see his brother. He said: "I am engaged; I will go to-morrow."

"But my brother will not be alive to-morrow. Come now and see him, he so wants to see you."

The man's better nature rose in him, and he said a hurried good-bye to his friend, and went off with the boy. He had been accustomed to scenes of wretchedness and misery, but he had never seen anything like this before. The room was without furniture. In one corner lay the father and mother of the dying boy, shamefully drunk. In the opposite corner lay the little boy on a heap of rags. He went and stood over him, and said, tenderly, "Shall I send for a doctor?"

He said, "O no, Cap; it is not that."

"Shall I send for a nurse to get you a nice clean bed, and have you made comfortable?"

"No, Cap; it is not that."

"What is it, my dear boy?"

"Did not you tell me that Jesus died to save sinners?"

"Yes, my boy, I did."

"Did not you tell me that he was willing to receive all that would come to him?"

"Yes, my boy, I did."

Then extending his emaciated hand still further, and making an effort to get up on his elbow, he said:

"And is he willing to receive me?"

"Yes, my boy, he is."

"Then he has received me," and the hand fell, and he dropped back upon his heap of rags, dead.

The dying testimony of that poor, wretched boy, brought up amid such surroundings, with a drunken father and drunken mother, was a sufficient reward for a lifetime spent in working for Jesus. O what glorious fields some of you have, who are working in the Sunday-school, and in rescue-work, or have opportunity of any kind to seek out your neighbor who is not a Christian, and bring to him the glorious knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

XX.

THE UNWRITTEN STORY OF ARCHIPPUS.

"And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it."—COLLOSSIANS IV, 17.

TWENTY-FIVE words will cover all that has ever been written permanently enough to come down to our time concerning Archippus. We do not know, therefore, much about him. In his letter to Philemon, Paul calls him a fellow-soldier, and all the rest we know about him is in our text. He was probably a preacher. Whether he was eloquent or not, we are not informed; whether he was successful in winning souls or not, we have not been told. We know nothing about the details of his family life. All we know is that he had enlisted in the Christian war as a fellow-soldier for Christ with Paul, and that Paul found it necessary to spur him up to the full measure of his duty by sending this very plain, direct, and heart-searching message to him in his letter to the Colossians. One would suspect from this message that Archippus was a man who was in no great danger of overworking him-

self; a man, possibly, of considerable gifts and promise, who was likely to fail to do his best through lack of earnestness and devotion; a man whom Paul feared to be a little lazy about his work; or, it may be, his mind was taken up with side issues, and Paul feared that the great work which constituted the chief ministry of his life was going to suffer thereby. Anyhow, Paul, who was a busy man, and in the habit of coming directly to the point, sends him this center shot, which I can imagine coming to him like the bursting of a shell in the ears of a rather dilatory and absent-minded soldier: "Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it."

It seems to me there is a good message for us in this suggestive little note to Archippus. The first thought suggested by it is, that life is a ministry. It is not an idle voyage. We are not painted ships on a painted ocean, but we have set sail with a definite and distinct purpose. It is of great importance that we have this high conception of life. Too many people simply drift upon the scene without any definite haven, and with no especial care or sense of responsibility as to the cargo they carry. Only disaster can come from such an attitude toward life.

I remember once to have stood at the mouth of the Umpqua River in Southern Oregon, where it enters the Pacific Ocean, and looked for many miles up the long, sandy beach north of the mouth of the river. It was covered with tens of thousands of great and splendid trees. It seemed to be a point to which the currents of the sea naturally carried the driftwood coming over a large section of the surrounding ocean. There were many kinds of trees there—great redwoods and pines and hemlock and spruce, and many others from many countries. They had drifted up on the sand at high-tide, and after a little had become imbedded, and remained until, as the centuries went on, they were covered over by the sand, and still other great trees were drifted above them. As I looked over the miles of stranded driftwood, I said to myself: "How different the fate of these trees from others that grew near them!" Doubtless along the coasts in the great forests where these trees stood, many other trees were felled by the lumbermen, and rafted away to the great mills, and cut into lumber, some of which went into the building of great ships, or splendid ocean steamers, that afterwards went out to defy the wind and wave on every ocean. They became a part of the com-

mercial life of the world, and carried passengers and cargo safely through dark nights of storm, and brought them at last to the safe harbor.

But these trees lying on the beach were uprooted in some great storm, or in some flood of the river by which they grew, and were ruthlessly carried out to sea. There they were at the mercy of wind and wave, of every current that swept the surface of the sea. They were without compass or wheel or chart or pilot; they were simply driftwood; and, after long and helpless drifting, were stranded on the sands to rot. I said to myself, how often is this duplicated in human life! Two young men grow up in the same home; have the same nurturing circumstances surrounding their lives; give the same promise in childhood and youth; but after a while one is builded into the life of the world, enters with definite purpose and plan into its work, fills life to the full measure with sincere and earnest ministry; but the other, by some flood of appetite or passion, is swept out to sea, is the prey of every wind and current and tide for a time, and at last drifts toward the sand-bar and is beached for eternity.

This conception of life as a divinely-granted

ministry brings with it suggestions of a glorious fellowship. First of all with Him who was the great Minister.

One of Tennyson's visitors once ventured to ask him what he thought of Jesus Christ. They were walking in the garden, and, for a minute, Tennyson said nothing; then he stopped by some beautiful flower. "What the sun is to that flower, Jesus Christ is to my soul; he is the sun of my soul."

If we make life a ministry divinely granted us from heaven, it brings us into an inspiring fellowship with Jesus Christ, and our lives unfold with a beauty and a fragrance unknown before. The heaviest and most unromantic toil is covered with a joy, and full of inspiration, when once we have entered into that spirit of ministry. There is perhaps no toil that is more absolutely drudgery than that of drawing water from wells in dry countries; and yet the sacred historian tells of a certain time in the history of Israel, during their wanderings in the wilderness, when they were so full of hope and courage that the men who drew water had a song that they sung back to the well, as sailors sing when they are hoisting their sails.

You may find it over in Numbers—a Song of the Well. “Then sang Israel this song:

“Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:
The well which the princes digged,
Which the nobles of the people delved,
With the scepter and with their staves.”

How different would have been the history of the Israelites if they had always lived in that spirit! Forty days, instead of forty years, would have sufficed to cross the desert between the land of bondage and the Canaan of which they dreamed.

To give our best always, as Christ did—heaven coming down to the very poorest of earth—that is the spirit which glorifies ministration.

A wealthy lady, young and beautiful, who had lately experienced genuine conversion, was so overflowing with love for the Savior that she went to visit a certain prison. One day, before starting on this errand of mercy, she went to her conservatory, and her gardener gathered her a large box of flowers, and was about to tie it up for her, when she noticed a perfect white rose untouched, and asked that it be added.

“O no,” he said; “please keep that for yourself to wear to-night.”

“I need it more just now,” she said, and took

it with her on her journey. Reaching the prison, she commenced her rounds among the women's wards, giving a few blossoms to each inmate with a leaflet or a verse of Scripture, and everywhere a message of sympathy and Christian hope.

"Have I seen all the prisoners here?" she asked the jailer.

"No; there is one you can not visit. Her language is so wicked it would scorch your ears to hear it."

"She is the one who most needs me," she answered. "I have one flower; the choicest of all I brought. Can you not take me to her?"

When she came up to the grated door, the wretched woman inside greeted her with bitter curses; but the only reply she gave was the beautiful white rose, which was left in the woman's cell. As she turned away she heard one heart-breaking cry, and the voice which had been muttering curses moaned over and over again the one word: "Mother! mother! mother!"

When she came again the next week, the jailer met her saying: "That woman you saw last is asking for you constantly. I never saw a woman so changed."

She went to the cell, and, instead of curses,

she was met with a cry of delight; and soon the head of the penitent woman was resting on the shoulder of her new-found friend, sobbing out her sad story:

“That white rose was just like one which grew by our door at home in Scotland—my mother’s favorite flower. She was a good woman. My father’s character was stainless; but I broke their hearts by my wicked ways; then drifted to America, where I have lived a wicked life. Is there any hope for me?” That was the beginning of a new life, which was to be of blessing to others. The young woman had made no mistake when she saved the best to minister to the worst.

We have also suggested, in our study this morning, the individual ministry of our lives. Archippus had a ministry of his own. Paul says: “Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received.” How much is lost because we are not faithful to our individual ministry!

A few years ago a party of tourists through the mountains in North Carolina stopped for a few days at the picturesque village of Waynesburg. While they were climbing one of the mountains near the town, they met a young girl

driving some cows to pasture. She had a beautiful head and noble figure, which her dress, a short, blue flannel gown and a white handkerchief knotted at her throat, set off. Her hair was twisted in a smooth coil at the nape of her neck.

The artist of the party exclaimed with delight: "Come to-morrow, just as you are," he begged, "and I will make a picture of you!"

The girl promised, well pleased at the invitation; but the next day, when she appeared, the artist found, to his horror, that she wore a tawdry print gown, looped and bedizened with bows, in an attempt at imitation of the dresses of the ladies of his own party. Her hair was cut in a bang, puffed and frizzed. Upon her hands were a pair of soiled gloves. She even attempted to mince as she walked. All the grace of her free carriage, learned in climbing the mountain passes with the freedom of a wild deer, was gone. She was a ridiculous burlesque of a fine lady of the town.

So just in proportion as we forsake our own natural part in life, and undertake to copy others whose duties are different from our own, we utterly fail to fill the place which God has designed for us.

There is, as one has well said, a spurious individualism which is a disease of our own time ; an attempt simply to be odd and different in little ways from our neighbors. Thus the drum-major, who marches at the head of the regiment, is often the most prominent figure in the passing column; but he may not render as valuable service as the man who carries a pail of water at the rear to refresh the wearied and the suffering.

"'T is a call for holy service
Which is borne on every breeze ;
'T is a call to self-denial,
'T is a call from worldly ease."

This genuine conception of our individuality will lead us to do the real service which it is possible for us to do, and which no one else can do. To have such a sense of individuality we must recognize, as Paul did about Archippus, that we personally have a ministry of our own, which has been committed to us. Tennyson must have had a vision of this when he sang his immortal couplet:

" Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them Thine!"

The greatest deeds of our human life are performed by men and women who have thus consecrated their individual gifts and talents to the Divine leadership, and who never think of fail-

ure, but take up the duty of their life as if it were ordained of God, as it is.

That is a striking illustration which Professor Drummond relates about a Glasgow boy, who was an apprentice to a telegraph lineman. One day this boy was up on the top of a four-story house, with a number of men, fixing up a telegraph-wire. The work was all but done, it was getting late, and the men said they were going away home; and the boy was left to nip off the ends of the wire. Before going down they told him to be sure to go back to the workshop, when he had finished, with his master's tools. The boy climbed up the pole, and began to nip off the ends of the wire. He lost his hold, and fell upon the slates; slid down, and then over in the air, down almost to the ground. A clothes-line, stretched across the yard, caught him on the chest, and broke his fall; but the shock was terrible, and he lay unconscious among some clothes on the ground. An old woman came out; seeing her rope broken, and the clothes all soiled, she thought the boy was drunk; shook him, scolded him, and went for the policeman. In the meantime, with the shaking, he came back to consciousness, rubbed his eyes, and got upon his feet. What do you think he did? He stag-

gered, half-blind, to the ladder; he got on the roof of the house; he gathered up his tools, put them into his basket, took them down, and when he got to the ground fainted dead away. Just then the policeman came, saw there was something wrong, and instead of taking him to jail, as he would have done if he had been a Tammany policeman, took him to an infirmary, where, after weeks of suffering, he recovered.

Think of the sublime consecration of the boy to his work, which made him, in that terrible moment, think only of his duty! He was thinking, not of himself, but of his master. That is what we want as Christians—a sublime consecration of ourselves to the duty that waits at our hand for us. How it simplifies matters when we are ready to do the very next duty which waits at our hand!

“Many a questioning,
Many a fear,
Many a doubt,
Hath its quieting here.
Moment by moment—
Let down from heaven—
Time, opportunity,
Guidance, are given.
Fear not to-morrows,
Child of the King;
Trust them with Jesus,—
‘Do the next thing.’

O, He would have thee
 Daily more free,
 Knowing the might
 Of thy royal degree ;
 Ever in waiting,
 Glad for his call ;
 Tranquil in chastening,
 Trusting through all.
 Comings and goings
 No turmoil may bring ;
 His all thy future,—
 ‘ Do the next thing.’

Do it immediately,
 Do it with prayer ;
 Do it reliantly,
 Casting all care ;
 Do it with reverence,
 Tracing His hand
 Who hath placed it before thee
 With earnest command.
 Stayed on Omnipotence,
 Safe ’neath his wing,
 Leave all resultings,—
 ‘ Do the next thing.’

Looking to Jesus,
 Ever serener—
 Working or suffering—
 Be thy demeanor.
 In the shade of his presence,
 The rest of his calm,
 The light of his countenance,
 Live out thy psalm.
 Strong in his faithfulness,
 Praise him and sing ;
 Then, as he beckons thee,
 ‘ Do the next thing.’ ”

How such a conception of life as a divinely-ordered ministry puts to shame that contemptible thought of the Christian faith as a sort of legal insurance policy against personal danger in the world to come! When we think of life as a divinely-planned ministry, it becomes a glorious program for this world, graduating into the paradise beyond as naturally as Commencement-day, with its honors, follows the years of work and study and enjoyment in college. Such a life must get richer as it goes on; and that, surely, is God's plan for us.

Dr. Thwing aptly says that lengthening life should have larger treasure in itself, and constantly larger treasure in other lives. Life should be, in its onward progress, like the growth of a great river. The river loses the swiftness and the dash and roar of its mountain origin. It loses the narrowness of its early rugged channels; but it gains in breadth, and its depth becomes more deep and more calm. It comes into relations with the great ocean beyond, and bears the commerce of the world on its hospitable bosom. So our lives, as they sweep onward, may lose somewhat of their swiftness of action, their impetuosity of feeling, and their rush of influence and tendency; but if we are

true to the ministry which God has committed to us, we shall be more than compensated for the loss of these in the widening of our fellowships, in the deepening spiritual life, and in the consciousness that we bear on the bosom of our being an increasing fleet of rich cargoes that belong to infinite space and endless time. We may know more of the shadows of earth as we go on, but we will have mirrored in our hearts more of the images of heaven.

One other thought which we must not close without noting, and that is, the exhortation Paul sends to Archippus that he shall fulfill his ministry. You get the real meaning of that word better if you turn it around, and let it read like this: "Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fill it full." That is the real meaning of it—to fill one's measure of privilege up to the brim.

We slander our Christianity when we let the world feel that we are all the time hankering after the flesh-pots of Egypt, when we enter so little into the spirit of Christ that we depend upon the pleasure and ambition of the world for our joy and our happiness. The Christian religion is not something which fences a man in,

fencing out the joy and inspiration of life; but it is rather that which sets him free, which causes the horizon to lift, which gives him a wider vision, a deeper joy, and a holier inspiration than can be found in the world. Many Christians do not work enough at the ministry that God gives them to acquire a real taste for the joys of the soul.

One day at lunch a little boy laid down his spoon, and said: "I don't like this soup. It is not good."

"Very well, then," said his wise mother, "you need not eat it."

That afternoon the little boy had to go with his father to weed the garden. It was very warm, and they worked until supper-time. Then they went into the house, and the mother brought the boy a plate of soup.

"That's good soup, mother," he said; and he ate it to the last drop.

"It's the very same soup you left at dinner to-day. It tastes better now because you earned your supper."

"A dinner earned by honest labor
Will never want a pleasant flavor."

Given a Church overflowing with devotion and hard work for the Master, and you will have

a Church full of appetite and zest for spiritual joys, that will know what Billy Bray, the converted Cornish miner, meant when, in response to the people of his Church, who threatened if he did not quit praising God so much in the meetings they would shut him up in a barrel, he replied: "Then I'll praise the Lord through the bung-hole!"

Phillips Brooks said he once asked Bishop Huntington, "What do you think is the next thing our Church ought to do?" and he replied: "To live up to its manifesto." That is what we want, all of us—to live up to our manifesto—a full, rich, overflowing life, that will run over in benediction into all the lives about. A man who went camping in the Northern woods last summer, said he found a huge old hard-maple tree which was very interesting to him. In the first place, a woodchuck had made a sort of Gibraltar between two of its strong roots, and one could see where the wolves had been gnawing at them, trying to get at him. Farther up, a family of squirrels had an airy residence in one of the great limbs. In the very topmost crotch there was a crow's-nest, which had been improved from year to year, until one no sooner looked at the tree than he saw the bunch of

sticks and leaves. Then, as he examined it more closely, he found the scars nearly grown over, which showed where the trapper or some old Indian had tapped it, for its sweet syrup, in the spring-time. But the old maple seemed to rejoice in all this hospitality, and, though very old, its mantle of green sheltered the young crows and the young squirrels and the young woodchucks, and did not seem to miss the sweet syrup which had gone to feed the young Indian in some distant wigwam.

The psalmist says that we who are the trees of the Lord shall be full of sap, ministering to others, opening our hearts to those who need, spreading our branches out in the sunshine of God's providence, gathering sweetness and verdure and beauty, until our life is not only full, but overflowing, so that every timid, hungering, needy soul may find there a refuge and sympathy and comfort and life.

XXI.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES AND HIS POEMS OF THE SOUL.

“Who prophesied with a harp.”—I CHRONICLES XXV, 3.

IT is such a one as that whom we are come to study to-night. A kindly, gentle prophet, like Elisha rather than Elijah—one who had other ways of prophesying than the harp; but it is the music of that harp to which we prefer to listen this evening. The first characteristic of that music is its simple goodness. It is always clean and wholesome. No man's writing was more naturally and simply the bubbling over of the man's inner self than that of Oliver Wendell Holmes, whether in poetry or prose. What a great thing it has been for public righteousness in this country that our great poets, such as Longfellow, Lowell, Bryant, Emerson, Whittier, and Holmes, have all been men of pure, holy character—men true and loving to their brother man, and bowing reverently to the laws of God—men whose lives were as pure and sweet and fragrant of goodness as the noble songs they sang.

Of Holmes, we might use the words he wrote for his friend, Francis Parkman, the historian, only a few months ago :

“A brave, bright memory. His the stainless shield
No shame defaces and no envy mars;
When our far future's record is unsealed,
His name will shine among its morning stars.”

His belief in the protecting power of goodness, in the bullet-proof armor of duty, was as strong as Emerson's. Speaking of it, he exclaims: “A charmed life Old Goodness hath.” In his poem entitled “Sun and Shadow,” which is one of his best, he sets forth very clearly his vivid conception of the value of doing one's duty without regard to the world which is looking on :

“As I look from the isle, o'er its billows of green,
To the billows of foam-crested blue,
Von bark, that afar in the distance is seen,
Half-dreaming, my eyes will pursue;
Now dark in the shadow, she scatters the spray
As the chaff in the stroke of the flail;
Now white as the seagull, she flies on her way,
The sun gleaming bright on her sail.

Yet her pilot is thinking of dangers to shun,
Of breakers that whiten and roar;
How little he cares if, in shadow or sun,
They see him who gaze from the shore!
He looks to the beacon that looms from the reef,
To the rock that is under his lea,
As he drifts on the blast, like a wind-wafted leaf,
O'er the gulfs of the desolate sea.

Thus drifting afar to the dim-vaulted caves,
Where life and its ventures are laid,
The dreamers who gaze while we battle the waves
May see us in sunshine or shade;
Yet true to our course, though the shadows grow dark,
We 'll trim our broad sails as before,
And stand by the rudder that governs the bark,
Nor ask how we look from the shore!"

Dr. Holmes was an optimist who believed, with Paul, that evil was no match, in the long run, for the good. An editorial writer, summing up his place in literature, aptly says that there was about all his writings, whether prose or poetry, a dauntless cheer. He knew the world as it is; he saw everything; and he was neither dismayed nor saddened. At all times, and under all circumstances, he spoke for the nobility that is in man, and the spiritual grandeur to which man is naturally destined; and his voice and pen always rang out clearly and bravely the inspiring watchwords of labor and hope. Whether in essay or novel or poem or history or public speech, this optimistic spirit, this indomitable will, which he describes in one of his poems as

"Genuine, solid, old Teutonic pluck,"

was always present, and thus, while dispensing the force and beauty of thought and the gentle light of humor, he infused into the hearts of all hearers or readers the blessing of his own splen-

did courage. No one can read the words of Holmes without receiving a constant impulse toward the straightforward, cheerful performance of duty, without being buoyed up in an unquestioned faith in the final reign of righteousness. In his cheerful faith, as in Paul's, "all things work together for good to them that love God." In a tribute to Harriet Beecher Stowe, for her great service in behalf of liberty, he sings :

"Sister, the holy maid does well
Who counts her beads in convent cell,
Where pale devotion lingers ;
But she who serves the sufferer's needs,
Whose prayers are spelt in loving deeds,
May trust the Lord will count her beads,
As well as human fingers."

To his clear-eyed optimism there were many failures in the world's sight who were crowned victors in the higher justice of heaven. Nothing could be sweeter than his poem entitled "The Voiceless," which ought to comfort any heart that has toiled without appreciation :

"We count the broken lyres that rest
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber,
But o'er their silent sister's breast
The wild-flowers who will stoop to number?
A few can touch the magic string,
And noisy Fame is proud to win them ;
Alas, for those that never sing,
But die with all their music in them !

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone
Whose song has told their heart's sad story,—
Weep for the voiceless, who have known
The cross without the crown of glory!
Not where Leucadian breezes sweep
O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,
But where the glistening night-dews weep
On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

O hearts that break and give no sign
Save whitening lip and fading tresses,
Till Death pours out his longed-for wine,
Slow-dropped from Misery's crushing presses,—
If singing breath or echoing chord
To every hidden pang were given,
What endless melodies were poured,
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven!"

Dr. Holmes was a beautiful illustration of the possibility of following out the Scriptural injunction of "speaking the truth in love." No man of his age had learned more perfectly the art—if indeed it was an art, for it seemed to be first nature with him—of rebuking error and folly, yet all the while maintaining the sweetest and most loving of tempers. He seldom, if ever, reaches the intense and sublime moral earnestness of James Russell Lowell in his warfare against wrong, and rarely reaches the high spiritual altitude that was such an easy climb for Whittier; yet he did speak the truth, and spoke it with more love and kindness than either of them. In

war time, on a Fourth of July, he uttered this splendid paragraph :

“Whether we know it or not, whether we mean it or not, we can not help fighting against the system that has proved the source of all those miseries which the author of the Declaration of Independence trembled to anticipate, and this ought to make us willing to do and to suffer cheerfully. There were holy wars of old, in which it was glory enough to die ; wars in which the one aim was to rescue the sepulcher of Christ from the hands of infidels. The sepulcher of Christ is not in Palestine ! He rose from that burial-place more than eighteen hundred years ago. He is crucified wherever his brothers are slain without cause ; he lies buried wherever man, made in his Maker’s image, is entombed in ignorance lest he should learn the rights which his divine Master gave him ! This is our holy war.”

Neither Lowell nor Whittier ever said anything with a truer ring for freedom than that ; and more than that, he gave his only son, who went to the front for years, and nearly lost his life for liberty ; and yet his kind heart made it to him always a war against the system of

slavery, and not against his brothers. He well says :

"Grieve as thou must o'er history's reeking page;
Blush for the wrong that stains thy happier age;
Strive with the wanderer from the better path,
Bearing thy message meekly, not in wrath;
Weep for the frail that err, the weak that fall,
Have thine own faith,—but hope and pray for all!"

It was in the same spirit that he wrote "Brother Jonathan's Lament for Sister Caroline," on the secession of the Carolinas from the Union :

"O Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,
We can never forget that our hearts have been one,—
Our foreheads both sprinkled in Liberty's name,
From the fountain of blood with the finger of flame."

And he extends the olive-branch in these tender and hospitable lines :

"But when your heart aches, and your feet have grown sore
Remember the pathway that leads to our door!"

Oliver Wendell Holmes believed in the divine mission of joy. He believed that his gift of mirth was from God, and gave it a free rein. Once he wrote :

"If word of mine another's gloom has brightened,
Through my dumb lips the heaven-sent message came;
If hand of mine another's task has lightened,
It felt the guidance that it dares not claim."

As a joy-bringer, this happy-tempered poet has been a great blessing to the world. Some one not long ago said that Dr. Holmes's life was originally devoted to the practice of medicine, and his pleasure was to alleviate the ills of the body; but his broad sympathy for his fellows led him to his true mission, when, from a healer of bodily disease, he became the inexhaustible singer of mental health and good cheer. Other physicians may have done more to assuage pain, but no other "medicine man" of our time has shown such a faculty of radiating joy.

What a delightful thing it must have been to Dr. Holmes to look back over his long and fruitful life, and find scarcely a line of prose or poetry which he had written that contains the slightest bitterness or ill-feeling. As one says, he dipped his keen-pointed pen often in the honey-dew, but never in gall and wormwood. He set the world to laughing and to loving; to laughing at legitimate objects of laughter, and to loving the true, the beautiful, and the good.

Yet in him, as in nature, the tear was always close to the smile. That poem of "The Last Leaf," which has set all the world laughing through two generations, has yet in it a verse which Abraham Lincoln declared to be the purest

specimen of pathos in the English language—the stanza which, speaking of the old man, says:

“The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom;
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.”

And surely nothing is so full alike of pathos, sympathy and faith, as the lines written on the death of Martha, his washerwoman:

“Sexton! Martha's dead and gone;
Toll the bell! toll the bell!
Her weary hands their labor cease;
Good- night, poor Martha, sleep in peace!
Toll the bell!

Sexton! Martha's dead and gone;
Toll the bell! toll the bell!
She'll bring no more, by day or night,
Her basketful of linen white!
Toll the bell!

Sexton! Martha's dead and gone;
Toll the bell! toll the bell!
Sleep, Martha, sleep, to wake in light,
Where all the robes are stainless white.
Toll the bell!”

Such a man could not grow old in the ordinary acceptation of that term. All his years have been full of activity. The years came to him as to others, bringing the white hair, the wrinkled cheek, the stooping figure, and the

trembling hand, but they failed to destroy the fine edge on his joyous temper, or break down the strong optimism of his spirits. He lived up to Goethe's lofty command, "Keep true to the dreams of thy youth," and so never lost the dauntless cheer of his boyhood.

Dr. Henry M. Field says: "He was a man of robust conscience, like the race from which he sprung. His sense of duty was keen and vigorous, but it had none of that morbid self-consciousness which—with perhaps less of truth than they suppose—some of our latter-day writers attribute to the New England character. He helped his generation to do its work and bear its burdens; he saw all the bitterness, all the pathos, of our American life—the need of a larger tolerance, of a wider mercy; and he brought the wealth of cheerfulness, the rippling melody of mirth, the soft flash of humor, to play around the hard sides and sharp angles of our natural character, and molded it into something more human, more lovely, and more beautiful than it had been before. Free and fearless in his freedom of thought, he was never hampered by fear of criticism, and so he was always true to the best that was in him."

Dr. Holmes had a young heart to the end of

his life. On the occasion of his last birthday, only six weeks ago, in speaking of his age, he said: "The burden of years sits lightly upon me, as compared to the weight it seems to many less advanced in years than myself." The loneliness of old age was, of course, felt by Dr. Holmes, as, one by one, the contemporaries of his youth dropped away; but he was so fresh-hearted and so sunny-tempered that the number of his years was never allowed to stand between him and the throbbing heart of human kind. As wrote his friend and fellow-poet, William Winter, in his tribute to the veteran who has left us at eighty-five, and was then, to use his suggestive phrase, "seventy years young:"

"When violets fade, the roses blow;
When laughter dies, the passions wake;
His royal song, that slept below,
Like Arthur's sword beneath the lake,
Long since has flashed its fiery glow
O'er all we know.

The silken tress, the mantling vine,
Red roses, summer's whispering leaves,
The lips that kiss, the hands that twine,
The heart that loves, the heart that grieves,—
They all have found a deathless shrine
In his rich line!"

But it is well for us to remember that his glorious old age was a natural evolution. The

secret of his noble career is open to our gaze in the poem which, of all he had written, was his favorite, and will probably outlive all the others, "The Chambered Nautilus." Holding the chambered shell in his hand, whose separate walls, as the lines of a tree, mark its age, the poet meditates:

"This is the ship of pearl, which poets feign
Sails the unshadowed main;
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings,
In gulfs enchanted, where the siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare;
Where the cold sea-maids rise, to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl;
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed.

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the last year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in its last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!

From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathéd horn.

While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought, I hear a voice that sings :

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll !

Leave thy low-vaulted past !

Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,

Till thou at length art free,—

Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"

One can not read that last verse without remembering the splendid ambition of Paul, as expressed in his Letter to the Philippians: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." A noble life will naturally grow out of such an ambition. It is the natural fruit of such an ideal.

Remember that to be a glorious old man, one must begin young. It is on the hilltops of boyhood where the current of life gets its trend.

Dr. Holmes himself sings of the "Two Streams"
that tell of life's early choice of an ideal:

"Behold the rocky wall
That down its sloping sides
Pours the swift rain-drops, blending, as they fall,
In rushing river-tides!

Yon stream, whose sources run,
Turned by a pebble's edge,
Is Athabasca, rolling toward the sun
Through the cleft mountain-ledge;

The slender rill had strayed,
But for the slanting stone,
To evening's ocean, with the tangled braid
Of foam-flecked Oregon.

So from the heights of Will
Life's parting stream descends,
And, as a moment turns its slender rill,
Each widening torrent bends—

From the same cradle's side,
From the same mother's knee—
One to long darkness and the frozen tide;
One to the Peaceful Sea!"

XXII.

MAKING A FEAST FOR HEAVENLY VISITORS.

“And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them.”—GENESIS XVIII, 1, 2.

THERE is an interesting background to this picture,—the wide-reaching plains of Mamre, stretching far off over that great rich pasture, so well watered that Lot had dared to risk his soul in order to have it for his flocks. It is a hot day, and it is high noon. The only attractive spot in the immediate vision is a little group of great oak-trees, under the shade of which Abraham, the friend of God, has erected his tent and the many tents of his followers. Sitting in the door of the tent, that he may catch every breath of refreshing breeze, is the splendid figure of Abraham, with his long, white, patriarchal beard. He has a turban on his head, and sandals on his feet, and is a veritable picture out of the old wonder-book of the East. It is very hot. The birds are hidden away among the thick branches of the trees; every living thing,

unless it be some cold-blooded lizard or sluggish snake, seeks some place of shade and rest. It is that time of the day which, in a tropical land, is as still and quiet as the midnight. Abraham sits there, in his great tent door under the spreading branches of the big oak, dreamy and half-asleep, when he is suddenly aroused, and becomes brightly awake at the apparition of three strange visitors. Although their abrupt appearance is remarkable, he does not at first know that they are from heaven, but supposes they are three brother-men, weary with travel. When he sees them approaching, he springs to his feet like a boy, and runs to meet them, and bows himself to the ground, and begs that they will not pass by, but stay and permit him to entertain them. Water is brought to wash their feet. They are given a good, shady, cool place under the trees. Fresh bread is baked, and Abraham gets Sarah herself to looking after the fresh cakes as they baked upon the hearth; and, to show special honor to his guests, he, despite the heat of the day, goes out to the herd and fetches a calf, tender and good, and gives it to a servant, with orders to hurry the dressing of it. And when it is prepared, instead of calling one of his servants to serve his guests, this splendid old prince him-

self takes the fresh cakes from Sarah's hands, and butter and milk, and the calf, fresh roasted over the coals, and sets it before them, and stands by them under the tree, and serves them while they eat.

Now, Abraham did all this while he thought they were men, simply his brother-men. I have called special attention to this, because it is through our brother-men that we find God. That is the way Abraham found him, and that is the way we must find him. As John writes: "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him;" and again, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;" and again, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" There can be no conception of God as our Father without a tender and reverent conception of man as our brother.

Olive Schreiner, one of the bright literary women of our own epoch, dreamed a dream, and wrote it. She says: "I dreamed I saw a land, and on the hills walked brave women and brave men, hand in hand; and they looked into each

other's eyes, and were not afraid. And I saw the women also hold each other's hands.

"And I said to him beside me: 'What place is this?'

"And he said: 'This is heaven.'

"I said: 'Where is it?'

"He said: 'On earth.'

"And I said: 'When shall these things be?'

"And he answered: 'In the future.'"

May God haste the time when Christ's leaven of brotherliness shall have so permeated the heart of all mankind that this dream may become the present reality!

We may be thankful that, abundant as the evidence of sin is, and fiendish as some of its shouts of victory are now and again, still more abundant is the evidence that faith in the Brotherhood of Jesus Christ is permeating the heart of all modern life, and expressing itself in ten thousand ways. Every new college which is endowed; every Home that is built for the destitute; every public library that is thrown open to the multitude; every Home built for the aged; every gallery of pictures, adorned with beauty, for the eyes of the poor; every church-spire that towers heavenward, indicating the heavenly sympathy and brotherhood beneath,—indeed, every

institution and society and heart-throb of brotherhood, by which the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, and weary shoulders are relieved of their burdens, are indications of the working of that leaven of the Christ-spirit in the hearts of men.

How often this comes out in the little deeds that are performed without any thought of record or praise! A writer in a New York newspaper tells of a glimpse that was had of a kind act, the doer of which little suspected that she was noticed. Among the passengers on an elevated train was a sweet-faced young woman, dressed in fresh but not deep mourning, such as one might wear for a young child. At one of the stations another woman got on, carrying a baby. Both were cleanly but poorly dressed, the baby particularly needing warmer garments than its gingham dress for the sharp air of the day. It wore no hat; a little shawl pinned over its head served for a hat and cloak as well.

The mother and her child were seated directly opposite the lady in black, whose gaze was riveted upon them. She watched the baby as it she could not take her eyes from it, and when a shifting of the passengers left a vacant seat on the side of the mother, she crossed and took it.

"What a bright baby!" she said, leaning toward it. "How old is she?" with a soft smile at the pleased mother.

The woman told her.

"Ah," said the first speaker, "my baby was a month older; but she was no larger." Then she bent down and smiled in the baby's eyes, letting its little hand clasp one of her gloved fingers. "There is a little coat and a warm cap," she said, speaking low and rapidly. "Will you give me your address, and let me send them to you?"

The woman scarcely caught the meaning.

"Quick, please; I leave at the next station," urged the other, still playing with the baby.

Hesitatingly, then, and flushing a little, an address was given. A low "Thank you," was the reply, and the train slowed up.

The involuntary listener saw the black-robed figure pause a moment on the platform outside, and take up a tablet attached to her belt, evidently to write down the address. As she did so, a glimpse was had, too, of a silver cross, and a tiny knot of purple ribbon, which showed that it was in the name of the Brother, Christ, the dead baby's garments were offered. If that brotherly kindness should cover the world, this would be heaven indeed. Somebody has said

that kindness is the turf of the spiritual life, on which Mrs. Bottome, writing to a friend, commented: "I trust, my dear, that your lawn will be very green." May that prayer be answered for us all!

There is something else in this study which attracts me, I think, more than anything, and that is, that Abraham was the kind of man whom God and the angels could visit with mutual pleasure and delight. Many another old Bedouin chief dwelt in that desert who never saw the angels except in dreams of torment, and never thought of God except with a shudder. Abraham lived at a lofty altitude of soul, where he could see God and talk with him face to face. Wherever he wandered in the desert he built an altar, and God appeared to him there. Not only so, but in the every-day affairs of his tent-life, God came to him as in the Scripture incident we are studying. Some one says there are outlooks which can only be gained from certain elevations, and for a broad and just view one must reach the heights. No amount of will-power, imagination, conjecture, or laborious study can take the place of standing where one can see. To be a noble, pure soul, that is the condition of heavenly friendship and communion.

"There has come to my mind a legend, a thing I had half forgot,
And whether I read it or dreamed it,—ah, well, it matters not!
It is said that in heaven, at twilight, a great bell softly swings,
And man may listen and hearken to the wondrous music that rings,
If he puts from his heart's inner chamber all the passion, pain, and strife,
Heartache and weary longing, that throb in the pulses of life;
If he thrust from his soul all hatred, all thoughts of wicked things,
He can hear in the holy twilight how the bell of the angels rings.
And I think there lies in this legend, if we open our eyes to see,
Somewhat of an inner meaning, my friend, to you and to me.
Let us look in our hearts and question: Can pure thoughts enter in
To a soul if it be already the dwelling of thoughts of sin?
So, then, let us ponder a little—let us look in our hearts and see
If the twilight bell of the angels could ring for us—you and me."

Some one, writing about Emerson, says that he had been so in the habit of seeing beauty, that through the chinks which the storms of old age made in his life-house, as the blasts of winter shook it, he looked out for and saw only the beautiful. When his memory had failed, only a little before his own dying, he turned away from looking on the dead face of his friend, Long-

fellow, and said to a friend who attended him :
“That gentleman was a beautiful soul, but I have forgotten his name.”

The ever-young angel of beauty and purity stays with a soul who likes to look at the treasures she so loves to show him ; and when age comes, and every one else goes on the hunt for younger society, this spirit of beauty and holiness spends the long days and nights with him who has learned her secret, and caught her immortal youth. Be assured that no grace of culture, and no pride of success can finally and permanently, either in this world or any world, take the place of that rare perfume of goodness which comes from fellowship with Christ, from communion with God. Better a thousand times a career that is rugged and rude, bearing every trace of sorrow and trial and hardship, but fragrant with the fruits of the Spirit, than a life that is covered with luxury and ease and applause, yielding, after all, only the apples of Sodom. How clearly Mrs. Spofford sings this heart-searching truth :

“There were two vases in the sun ;
A bit of common earthen-ware,
A rude and shapeless jar was one ;
The other—could a thing more fair
Be made of clay ? Blushed not so soft
The almond blossoms in the light ;

A lily's stem was not so slight
With lovely lines that lift aloft
Pure grace and perfectness full-blown ;
And not beneath the finger-tip
So smooth, or pressed upon the lip,
The velvet petal of a rose ;
Less fair were some great flower that blows
In a king's garden, changed to stone !

Kings' gardens do not grow such flowers—
In a dream-garden was it blown ;
Fine fancies, in long sunny hours,
Brought it to beauty all its own.
With silent song its shape was wrought
From dart of wing, from droop of spray
From colors of the breaking day,
Transfigured in a poet's thought.
At last, the finished flower of art—
The dream-flower on its slender stem—
What fierce flames fused it to a gem !
A thousand times its weight in gold
A prince paid ere its price was told,
Then set it on a shelf apart.

But through the market's gentle gloom,
Crying his ever-fragrant oil,
That should anoint the bride in bloom,
That should the passing soul assoil,
Later, the man with attar came,
And tossed a penny down, and poured
In the rude jar his precious hoard.
What perfume, like a subtle flame,
Went through its substance, happy-starred !—
Whole roses into blossom leapt,
Whole gardens in its warm heart slept !
Long afterward, thrown down in haste,
The jar lay, shattered and made waste,
But sweet to its remotest shard !"

It is said that a flock of pigeons who have alighted in a field of lavender will carry away the sweet perfume on their wings. And so Abraham, dwelling in his desert, had had so many hours of heart-communion with God that his life was full of peace, and fragrant with righteousness. If that was possible to Abraham in the desert, surely it is possible to us here and now in the latter days of the nineteenth century. As an enthusiastic saint says: "Let us stop parsing heaven in the future tense, and begin to sing its hallelujahs now!"

If we shall do that, we shall find God appearing to us, as to Abraham, in many of the ordinary visitors of our lives. I was calling, only this week, on a lady who told me about her husband's conversion when he was past middle-life. Their son had been very ill for a long time. He was a happy, Christian young man, and though he expected that he would not live long, nothing gave him any sorrow save the fact that his father was not a Christian. One morning, as his father bade him good-bye to go to his work, he looked after him wistfully, and said: "Come home early to-night, father." Before the day had passed, the father was hastily telegraphed for, but ere he could reach his home his son had reached the

home above. In the agony of his first grief he inquired what the last words of his son had been, and when they answered, "I should die content if only father were a Christian," his heart was broken, and he said: "God helping me, his prayer shall be answered, and I will meet him in heaven." From that hour he has been striving earnestly to lead a Christian life. Thus his son was God manifest in the flesh to him.

The story is told of some fishermen who went out for a sail, when a mist came on, and everything grew dim. It thickened into a fog, and after a little nothing could be seen but the edge of the water against the boat. "I'd give a good deal to know where we are," said one of the men. Suddenly a far-off sound was heard. It was the custom in that fishing village, when fathers and sons were out in their boats, if the fog came on, for women and children to gather on the shore, and sing high and clear. They were doing it now. "Steer for the voices," said the owner of the boat to the man at the rudder. He did so, and they were saved. Some years ago a fisherman was out in a fog all by himself. He was in danger of running on rocks, and began to think he must be lost. At length he heard the cry of

a small voice. He thought he knew it, and listened again. Then he heard clear, "Steer straight for me!"

It was the voice of his little daughter. He called, and she replied again and again, "Steer straight!"

He passed the rocks, stepped on the shore, and caught her in his arms. His little daughter had saved him. Some months afterward he lost her. All was dark in life now; but after a time he remembered what she had said, "Steer straight for me, father!" and he turned the prow of his life-boat straight toward the heavenly shore. O, my brother, have you not had angelic visitors like that who are watching for you and waiting for you, and crying out across the darkness with words of love and tender entreaty, "Steer straight for me?"

One can not close a study like this without remembering that God, who was so often the guest of Abraham, has long since taken Abraham home, and for a long time Abraham has been the happy guest of God. Death to a man like Abraham could have had no gloom or sorrow. It need not have, my brother, to you. It will not have, if you give yourself in obedient, loving service to God.

An incident is related by an army chaplain. The hospital tents, during the afternoon of a battle, had been filling up fast, as the wounded men were brought to the rear. Among the number was a young man, mortally wounded, and not able to speak. The surgeons had been on their rounds of duty, and for a moment all was quiet. Suddenly this young man, before speechless, called out, in a clear, distinct voice: "Here!" The surgeon hastened to his side, and asked what he wished. "Nothing," said he. "They are calling the roll in heaven, and I was answering to my name." He turned his head, and was gone—gone to join the army whose uniform is washed white in the blood of the Lamb. That is death to those who have in life the guidance of God, who, like Abraham, are only pilgrims on the earth, and look through all earth's clouds, and behold a city whose builder and maker is God.

Brothers and sisters, it is the most blessed privilege that life has brought me that I am permitted, here and now, to offer you the loving friendship of Jesus Christ, who will guide you through every danger of life, and bring you safe at last into the haven of eternal rest.

Dr. Hugh Brown tells how he once made the trip on a steamer down the St. Lawrence River through Lachine Rapids, where the waters dashed and plunged in wild yet fascinating fury, and the vessel shook and rocked like a cockle-shell upon the waves. His courage did not fail; for he had absolute confidence in the ability and wisdom of a stern old Indian, who for many years, day after day, had stood as pilot upon the bridge. After they had gotten into smooth water, and were dropping anchor at Montreal, a little girl exclaimed, somewhat excitedly, to her mother: "Mamma, do you think the pilot would let me shake hands and thank him for having saved us from those awful waters?" The parent, with a half-amused expression, responded that she supposed that great official would have no objection; and so the little feet ran along until the little hand was suddenly pushed into that of the astonished old Indian, and a voice cried out: "Please, Mr. Pilot, I want to thank you for your kindness in bringing me and mamma and all of us safe through the angry rapids." And as the great bronzed hand grasped hers, a tear of honest pleasure, followed by a smile of wondrous sweetness, played over the old Indian's gratified and

astonished face, and amply rewarded the little artless maiden. Tennyson must have had some picture like that in his mind when he sang:

“For though from out this bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar.”

Ah! how glorious that will be, when the great Pilot of our salvation has shot our life-vessel through the rapids of death, to have the privilege of grasping his scarred hand, pierced with the nails that held them to the cross, and, looking up into his glorious face, to exclaim: “Blessed Pilot of my soul, great, glorious, ever-living Savior, accept my heartfelt thanks for having brought me and father and mother and multitudes of loved ones safely through.”

I know that, deep down in your heart, there must be something to which all this appeals. There is an old legend about the coast of Brittany, about an imaginary town called *Is*, which is supposed to have been swallowed up by the sea at some unknown time. According to the legend, the tips of the spires of the churches may be seen in the hollow of the waves when the sea is rough, while during a calm the music of their bells, ringing out the hymn appropriate

to the day, rises above the water. So, brother, I know that, deep down at the bottom of your heart, underneath all the waves of worldly ambitions and plans, of sinful habits and evil thoughts,—down, underneath it all, in your heart there are yearnings and desires for the better life, that ring sadly and perpetually. O, I pray God that you may give vent to that better self—that you may have power given by the Holy Spirit to take hold upon One who is able to lift that better self into triumphant rule in your life!

The End.

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